Democratic Evaluation and Improvement: A Set of Standards for Citizens and Democratic Institutions

by

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Para mi abuelo Geno.

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Abstract

Each chapter of this dissertation develops a standard with which to evaluate and guide the improvement of a different node of a democratic system. In the first chapter, I consider the relationship between citizens, their environment, and the formal infrastructure of democracy. The standard for this node is democratic health, which is a feature of the social epistemic environment in which citizens operate. I argue that a democratically healthy environment is one that is conducive to the development of citizens' epistemic capacities to reason and communicate about their interests. I then demonstrate how political phenomena such as polarization pose social epistemic challenges to democratic health and argue that an epistemic conception of civic virtue can guide efforts to improve it.

In the second chapter, I consider the relationship between representatives and their constituents under non-ideal conditions. The key standard for this node is systemic interest-responsiveness. I argue that observed public opinion and citizens' values, commitments, and goals can stand in tension, and that representative democracies must be responsive to both factors. On this basis, I argue in favor of pairing independent administrative agencies with expanded forms of public input.

In the third chapter, I consider how civic education can promote epistemic civic virtue. The key standard I develop here is the social epistemic public good. I argue that civic education can provide social epistemic benefits through its civic exchange function, which enables citizens to learn about the views and traditions of other citizens, and prepares them to effectively

communicate with diverse others. Furthermore, I argue that this function can be pursued in the absence of widespread agreement about which values civic education should promote.

Introduction

In recent years, many commentators in the public and academic spheres have expressed concerns about the stability and performance of democracies and key democratic institutions. These concerns include appeals to growing dissatisfaction with democracy among citizens in various countries where it has long been in place, concerns about the extent to which citizens are politically informed and engaged, and the extent to which political elites are equipped or motivated to serve their constituents. In light of these concerns, I develop a set of standards with which to evaluate key components of democracies and guide interventions to improve political decision-making within them, with a focus on social epistemic considerations.

My central contention is that challenging features of the social epistemic environment hinder the promotion of a variety of values that are taken to underlie democratic institutions. In order to develop guidance with which to address these challenges, I develop evaluative standards that are sensitive to the non-ideal conditions in which citizens of contemporary democracies, with a focus on the U.S., operate. I focus on social epistemic considerations, such as the ways in which citizens formulate and communicate political beliefs and how representatives respond to indicators of those beliefs. I examine three nodes of the democratic system where political belief-formation and communication are especially relevant. The first is the relationship between citizens, their social environment, and the formal infrastructure of democracy. The second is the relationship between representatives and the citizens they are tasked with representing. The third is the role and content of civic education, which aims to prepare citizens to participate in

democracy.

Before describing the content of these standards, and the arguments that support them in greater detail, I will first describe some basic features of my approach to developing a democratic theory framework that can serve this role.

One common democratic theory research program involves developing an idealized and/or comprehensive conception of what democracy is and why it is valuable. In this dissertation, I focus on a different, somewhat orthogonal set of questions about how to evaluate and improve actually existing democracies. Instead, my approach starts by asking: what value(s) are democracies supposed to promote and how might existing institutions succeed in doing so? Rather than committing to a particular account of the value of democracy or its key components, I take an ecumenical approach to see what progress can be made without securing agreement on these questions. Insofar as I appeal to a particular model of democracy, I limit myself to basic features of the social and institutional context in which democratic citizens operate. In particular, I think of democracy as a cluster of institutions that provide a basic political infrastructure that empowers citizens to influence the policies that govern them. At the most basic level, this infrastructure consists of electoral mechanisms and political rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly. Citizens can take actions within this infrastructure, such as voting, signing petitions, contacting representatives, engaging in protest, and setting up organizations, in order to influence political decision-making. I then incorporate more complexity into this basic framework by considering the role of particular social and institutional realities. For example, the ways in which public influence is institutionally mediated through representative institutions like elected legislatures and administrative agencies, or how the environment in which citizens operate, and the preparation they receive through civic education, can shape their capacity for the

political reasoning and communication that guides their public input activities.

This interest in developing relatively ecumenical guidance for democracies as they currently are leads me to two other features of my approach. The first is that I see this dissertation as an example of *non-ideal* theory. This term has typically been understood in the Rawlsian tradition as picking out "partial compliance theory", which can be contrasted with ideal theory, which assumes "strict compliance." When engaging in ideal theory, "[e]veryone is presumed to act justly and do his part in upholding just institutions", while in non-ideal theory, we can relax this assumption (Rawls 1971, 8-9). I follow Laura Valentini (2012), in maintaining that this distinction is multi-faceted. In addition to the distinction between (a) full and partial compliance, she suggests, the ideal/non-ideal distinction can also be used to indicate (b) whether feasibility considerations constrain normative theorizing, and (c) whether political theory aims at identifying a social ideal or transitional improvements without determining what the optimum is (654). The latter two dimensions of difference are most relevant to this dissertation, and I am engaged in non-ideal theorizing in both cases. Given my interest in developing standards with which to evaluate and improve existing democratic institutions and circumstances, I focus on transitional improvements without identifying optimal conditions while explicitly constrained by considerations of feasibility.

In order to identify transitional improvements from our current circumstances that are sensitive to feasibility constraints, I engage with empirical research from the social sciences in each chapter of the dissertation. For example, insights from political psychology are crucial to develop an accurate picture of the ways in which citizens learn and communicate under existing circumstances, and for identifying challenges to be addressed in transitional improvements. The importance of such engagement with empirical research suggests a more fine-grained distinction

within non-ideal theory. When engaged in theorizing in order to identify transitional improvements that are sensitive to feasibility constraints, one can focus on the (de)-idealization of different parameters and to different degrees. Given my interest in social epistemic considerations, I focus on non-ideal conditions for political learning and reasoning, which leads me to de-idealize features of the psychology of democratic citizens, the social groups to which citizens belong, and the costs of transitioning from our current set of institutional practices. However, other forms of non-ideal theory with different goals might emphasize other dimensions of (de)-idealization, such as cultural norms, barriers to inter or intra-national migration, or linguistic differences between communities. These different dimensions of (de)-idealization might then require engagement with other domains of empirical research than what I have included here.

The other key feature of my approach to theorizing is that it is *modular*. I do not consider every component of democracy that can be evaluated or improved at once. Instead, I isolate particular components while holding others fixed. For example, while developing an account of how to evaluate political representatives and improve representative institutions, I hold fixed the non-ideal social epistemic environment in which citizens currently operate. However, I later move on to consider how civic education efforts can prepare citizens to improve that environment, while holding the existing set of representative institutions fixed. This approach allows me to target particular components of democracy for analysis and reach piecemeal normative conclusions that do not rely on simultaneous changes across multiple domains.

This dissertation is also modular in a more mundane sense. While the different chapters of this dissertation are complementary, they are relatively freestanding. Each chapter has a different starting point, which does not correspond to the end point of the previous chapter, so

this dissertation does not provide one continuous line of reasoning that must be read together. Furthermore, in the cases where the argument in one chapter appeals to conclusions from another, I restate the premises that support the relevant conclusions, so that the chapters are self-contained.

With the basics of my methodological approach laid out, I now turn to a summary of the core chapters of this dissertation. Each chapter develops an evaluative standard with which to evaluate and guide the improvement of a different node of a democratic system.

The first chapter, Democratic Health and Epistemic Civic Virtue, considers the relationship between citizens, their social environment, and the formal infrastructure of democracy. The key standard I develop in this chapter is democratic health, which is a feature of the social epistemic environment in which citizens operate. I argue that a democratically healthy environment is one that is conducive to the development of citizens' key epistemic capacities to reason and communicate about their interests. Furthermore, I argue that the democratic health of a democracy can affect the extent to which the infrastructure of democracy, which consists of electoral mechanisms and political rights, can be used to advance the moral or political values with which theorists motivate or justify democracy. I demonstrate, with appeal to empirical evidence focused on the U.S., how political phenomena such as polarization, ethnocentrism, populist rhetoric, and the difficulty of communicating across social identity groups present social epistemic challenges to democratic health, and thereby threaten the extent to which the infrastructure of democracy can be used to promote its motivating values. Finally, I argue that an epistemic conception of civic virtue can illuminate the interdependence of (1) citizens' habits and dispositions and (2) their social and institutional environment, and guide efforts to improve democratic health.

In the second chapter, Responsiveness and Democratic Representation, I hold fixed that citizens face non-ideal social epistemic circumstances, and consider how we can evaluate and improve representation, in light of those circumstances. The key standard that I develop in this chapter is systemic interest-responsiveness, which is a feature of systems of representative institutions, but which can also provide action-guidance to individual representatives. I argue that observed public opinion and the values, commitments, and goals of citizens can stand in tension, and that representative democracies must balance both factors for responsive representation. I advocate a middle ground between views that understand the responsiveness of political representatives in terms of alignment between representative action and observed public opinion, and views that abandon responsiveness as a criterion of evaluation for political representatives altogether. Furthermore, I argue that this criterion is best understood as a feature of a *system* of institutions, rather than a feature of the actions of an individual representative. In light of this standard, I defend a representative division of labor between responsiveness to observed public opinion and indicators of citizens' values, commitments, and goals. Finally, I argue in favor of pairing robustly independent administrative agencies with expanded forms of public input in order to promote systemic interest-responsiveness.

In the third chapter, Civic Education and Epistemic Civic Virtue, I consider how civic education can promote the conception of epistemic civic virtue that concludes the first chapter. The key standard in this chapter is the social epistemic public good. I take up a common strategy for justifying the provision of civic education, which is that it contributes to public goods, but with appeal to the social epistemic benefits that civic education can provide, in light of the social epistemic challenges I discuss in Chapter 1. Civic education can provide these benefits by promoting epistemic civic virtue, which has three main components: (a) civic knowledge, (b) the

capacity to learn and communicate in the presence of diversity, and (c) a social epistemic mindset, whereby one considers the contributions one makes to creating or maintaining spaces for political learning and communication, in addition to efforts to advance first order political goals. I then argue that the civic education, in the form of formal schooling, provides a promising means of promoting epistemic civic virtue in light of the civic exchange function of civic education. The civic exchange function enables citizens to learn about the views and traditions of other citizens and prepares them to effectively communicate with citizens with different perspectives and backgrounds. I argue that the civic exchange function of civic education can be pursued in the absence of widespread agreement about which values civic education should promote. Finally, I consider objections to civic education that appeal to the threats of social engineering and indoctrination. I argue that while these objections impose limits on the form that civic education can take, my emphasis on civic exchange provides resources with which to manage these concerns.

Together, these standards provide a framework with which to evaluate democracies with respect to their ability to effectively make use of citizen input in the face of epistemic challenges, and guide attempts at improving this capacity.

In the rest of this dissertation, you will find each of the three chapters that I summarized above, followed by some concluding remarks on directions for future research

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Chapter 1: Democratic Health and Epistemic Civic Virtue

Introduction

A major goal of the extant body of democratic theory is to justify democracy and democratic institutions. Justifying democracy involves providing reasons why citizens should have some significant degree of political power in the form of democratic decision-making. Sometimes this involves the claim that citizens should be self-governing, while others appeal to the importance of having an equal say or a fair opportunity to influence political decision-making. The way in which democracy enables citizens to wield political power is meant to realize some key value or values, which then justify the institutional framework required for democracy. Outside the domain of theory, democratic institutions have become fairly widespread, and international surveys tout majority support for democracy across different countries and continents (Wike et al. 2017). One might take these two developments – the articulation of philosophical accounts of why citizens should have political power via democracy, and the expansion and public support of democratic institutions, to mark the end of the project of justifying democracy. Theorists have shown why citizens should have political power and practitioners have shown how it can be done.

In this paper, I suggest, however, that democratic theorists (and in turn, practitioners) should develop an account of how citizens can exercise political power in order to realize the value(s) of democracy given the challenging environments in which they operate. Such an account would help to strengthen defenses of democracy in the face of growing concerns and would help to guide efforts to improve democracy amid existing social epistemic challenges.

I take a step, then, to meet Adam Przeworski's recent challenge: "[t]o put forth a case for democracy, one must confront the experience of democracies as they are, 'really existing democracies.' It is not enough to urge, 'Do as we say, not as we do.'" (Przeworski 2016, 7). In order to strengthen the case for democracy under current conditions, I argue, we must pay attention to the "health" of democracies and their citizens and improve this health by cultivating epistemic virtue among the citizenry.

I will proceed as follows. In Section I, I articulate some reasons for reconsidering the justification for democracy under current political conditions. In Section II, I summarize the extant literature on the moral or political value of democracy and argue that citizens must be equipped to make use of the infrastructure of democracy to advance their interests, in order to realize any of the values identified by this literature. In Section III, I articulate a conception of democratic health, which is the extent to which a social environment facilitates the exercise and development of the epistemic capacities that citizens need to advance their interests through the means that democracies offer them. In Section IV, I discuss four social epistemic challenges to democratic health to demonstrate that we are currently facing unhealthy conditions in the U.S. In Section V, I discuss epistemic accounts of the value of democracy and argue that they do not provide sufficient guidance to respond to these challenges. Finally, in Section VI, I articulate an alternative framework with which to respond to these challenges with appeal to an epistemic conception of civic virtue.

I. Reconsidering the Case for Democracy

Despite the steady development of democratic theory and practice, there are growing concerns about the long-term stability and desirability of both key democratic institutions, and democracy as such. While public opinion surveys continue to show international support for

democracy, they also show support for autocratic rule among sizable minorities (Wike et al. 2017). Some political scientists have even begun to debate whether well entrenched democracies are undergoing the beginning stages of deconsolidation, whereby public support for, and ultimately the stability of, democratic institutions decline (Foa & Mounk 2016; 2017a; 2017b; Howe 2017; Mounk 2018).[1] These researchers point to a decline in support for democracy among citizens of established democracies such as the U.S. and Sweden, and an increase in openness to authoritarian alternatives. This shift in public opinion is driven especially by differences between the younger generation of millenials and the generations that preceded them (Foa & Mounk 2017b). There are a variety of explanations on offer for this shift, including economic conditions, failures of education policy, and anger at political elites. Under these conditions of concern and uncertainty, it is worth considering how and why democracy can still live up to its motivating values given current conditions, which seem to be driving at least some citizens away from democratic institutions.

Along with this research into the political attitudes of democratic citizens, there is also substantial academic interest in alternatives to democracy and standard liberal democratic institutions. For example, some, most notably Daniel Bell (2015), have looked to the governments of China and Singapore as alternatives to liberal democracy. Bell argues that these states have greater potential for continued improvement with the promotion of leaders via political meritocracy as compared to electoral democracies. Similarly, Jason Brennan (2016) argues against democracy and suggests epistocracy – rule by the knowers – as an alternative. Aside from the wholesale abandonment of democracy, others have debated specific features of democratic regimes, such as elections and existing enfranchisement regimes (Lopez-Guerra

[1] For criticisms of Foa & Mounk's deconsolidation concern and their responses see Inglehart 2016; Foa & Mounk 2017a; 2017b.

2014; Guerrero 2014; Przweworski 2018).[2] While I am by no means suggesting that there is a new anti-democratic academic consensus, the emergence of these research programs is indicative of the broader malaise with existing democracies.

These trends in public and academic interest suggest a need for a redevelopment of the case for democracy that is sensitive to the current conditions faced by democratic citizens. Such an account can respond to contemporary developments in the public sphere and in academia by articulating how democracies can realize their motivating values despite the challenges they face, and how they can continue to improve in the future.

II. The (Moral or Political) Value(s) of Democracy

Democratic theorists provide various justifications for democracy and its accompanying institutional framework, such as elections and protections for free speech and assembly. In most cases, these justifications involve articulating why democracies realize a value or set of values. One way to assess contemporary democracies is to determine what is required for them to live up to these values and see if contemporary democracies face any impediments to these requirements. In this section, I will identify four key moral or political values to which democratic theorists appeal and argue that they all depend on citizens' abilities to make use of the means that democracy offers them to advance their interests.[3]

[2] There is a case to be made that abandoning elections, as e.g., Guerrero (2014) argues, or engaging in other radical reforms would be more democratic that leaving the current set of democratic institutions intact. I do not take a stand on this question in this paper, but instead offer a diagnosis of a systematic problem that limits the extent to which the current set of institutions populating democracies can be used to fulfill their intended purpose. As a result, my proposals for how to improve democratic health focus on how to make improvements while leaving the basic features of democracy, as we know it, intact.

[3] There are multiple ways of mapping out the range of accounts of democracy and its (moral or political) value(s). A common binary distinction separates accounts that appeal to the outcomes that democracies realize – dependent conceptions in Ronald Dworkin's language - from accounts that appeal to the value of democratic procedures – detached conceptions (Beitz 1989, 20-23; Dworkin 2000, 186). More fine-grained taxonomies appeal to different kinds of outcomes or procedural values. For example, Nelson (1980) uses a four-fold grouping of (1) accounts appealing to procedural fairness and equality, (2) accounts that appeal to the value of political participation, (3) accounts that appeal to popular sovereignty, and (4) economic theories, which appeal to preference satisfaction. Beitz (1989) uses a threefold distinction between (1) best results theories, (2) popular will theories, and (3) procedural theories. I focus my taxonomy on the kinds of moral or political values that democracy is meant to realize (either through its procedures or as outcomes) to show how the realization of these values depends on further enabling conditions.

A. Popular Sovereignty

Some theorists argue that democracy is valuable because it promotes popular sovereignty: the idea that the government should be run by the will of the people. Government by the will of the people is valuable because it promotes liberty, as citizens impose the laws they must follow on themselves (or at least approve or reject them). The strongest readings of popular sovereignty often claim that a popular will determinately exists and can be identified (Rousseau 1761; Tännsjö 1992). These theorists often take this will to be reflected, in some sense, in the results of majority voting procedures.[4] Others are skeptical of the notion of an identifiable popular will and defend the importance of popular sovereignty on more modest grounds. These theorists instead find value in democratic participation as a form of popular veto, whereby citizens can act to reject political leadership that many agree threaten their interests or have created especially bad outcomes (Schumpeter 1976; Riker 1982; Przeworski 2010). [5] In this way, democratic citizens wield political power by revoking the authorization of representatives of which they do not approve. If there is no determinate sense in which the people have a popular will, then they can at least wield power by collectively determining who will represent them based on the distribution of their judgments, and by vetoing those representatives who most citizens evaluate negatively (Przeworski 2010, Chapter 8).

[4] Rousseau (1761) discusses the "General Will" and argues that it can be discovered via the result of majority vote where citizens vote according to their best judgment about the common good following individual deliberation. Tännsjö (1992) defends this kind of account, but is sensitive to concerns about situations where it is not clear that there can be a determinate preference attributed to the people because of social choice phenomena like preference cycling (Arrow 1950; Riker 1982). Instead, he argues that democracies uphold the will of the people as long as they follow one of the possible majority preferences in a preference cycle *and* would follow the majority preference were there to be a Condorcet winner (a majority preference regardless of voting procedure).

[5] One might think of the republican tradition of political theory as maintaining this claim by holding that the democratic citizenry provides a bulwark against domination by the government. For examples of this sort of claim, see Bellamy (2007) and Pettit (1997, Chapter 3; Chapter 6). However, some of these accounts go beyond appeals to popular sovereignty by developing accounts of civic virtue, which the state is supposed to cultivate in its citizens. I take up these republican theories in greater detail in Section VI, where I argue that they provide a useful starting point for a response to social epistemic challenges to democratic health.

B. Preference Satisfaction or Welfare

Other accounts highlight the value of democracy as a means of satisfying citizen's policy preferences and promoting welfare (Dahl 1956; Downs 1957; Buchanan & Tullock 1999).[6] These theorists often understand democracy as a process of exchange or bargaining between individuals and/or interest groups. Unlike in market transactions, where the relevant parties are presumed to *agree* to the exchange as mutually beneficial, political decisions often cannot be unanimous due to the diversity of citizens' preferences (Buchanan & Tullock 1999, 64-68; 127). Democracy is valuable as a substitute for unanimous agreement in that it brings different interest groups together to build enough support to pass policy proposals, and serves as a mechanism to hold public officials accountable to citizen's preferences in the long run.

Even when citizens find themselves in the minority, the fact that interest groups can negotiate with one another to pass legislation allows for welfare-enhancing maneuvers. For example, those in the minority with regard to one decision, but who have especially intense preferences, might offer a concession on another issue, for which they have less intense preferences, in exchange for support of their minority view. In addition, politicians' preferences to be reelected lead them to act in ways that accord with citizens' preferences lest they lose the next election. While each citizen's preferences cannot be satisfied with each policy choice, political decisions are constrained by the distribution of preferences among the citizens and the coalitions that they can form, which serves to promote citizens' welfare in the long run.

[6] Dahl (1956) characterizes democracy as the rule of "minorities" (with an emphasis on the plural) with different interest groups taking part in political activity and thereby influencing public policy (132). Buchanan & Tullock (1999) by comparison, worry that interest groups will allow entrenched interests to engage in rent-seeking, thereby making the government serve the interests of a minority while imposing costs on taxpayers. As a result, Buchanan & Tullock argue for constitutional limits on the power of democratic governments in situations where the costs of being on the losing side of majority rule are too high. Despite these differences, they both see democracy as a tool to facilitate bargaining; they just differ on the appropriate scope of this tool and on the role of constitutional constraints. Anthony Downs (1957) is less concerned with the prospect of *justifying* democracy, but provides an influential model of democracy based on the relationship between citizens' preferences for government policy and politicians' preferences to be reelected.

C. Fair Compromise

Other democratic theorists focus on the value of democracy as a way to reach fair compromises in the face of entrenched disagreement. Often, these accounts argue that democracy is valuable because it provides a uniquely acceptable compromise between disagreeing parties (Singer 1973; Beitz 1989; Rawls 1993; Waldron 1999; Estlund 2007).[7] Given the diversity of perspectives in democratic societies, there will often not be an uncontroversial normative standard on the basis of which to make collective decisions. Democratic institutions, such as elections with majority rule, provide an acceptable compromise by giving equal procedural consideration to each party without appealing to any particular conception of the good. Each citizen is given an equal say, and therefore an equal chance of advancing their interests and their conception of what should be done. Democracy serves as a fair compromise between giving any particular decision decisive control because there is no uncontroversial reason to favor one over the others.[8]

D. Equality

Finally, the value of empowering citizens can also be spelled out in terms of social equality. Kolodny (2014) describes this motivation as follows: "[t]he concern for democracy is rooted in a concern not to have anyone else "above"—or, for that matter, "below"—us: in the

[7] Estlund (2007) argues that procedural fairness is one of two sources of value for democracy; his justification of the authority and legitimacy of democracy also rests on claims on the epistemic quality of democratic decision-making as compared to any fair alternatives.

[8] These accounts differ with regard to the limits they impose on the perspectives that can be brought to bear on democratic decision-making. For example, some accounts appeal to a notion of reasonableness or qualified acceptance as criterion for excluding perspectives from the relevant compromise (Beitz 1989; Rawls 1993; Estlund 2007). These criteria are meant to ensure that rejections of the outcomes of democratic decision-making procedures can be justified in a way that is consistent with this motivation for democracy e.g., with appeal to standards that all can be expected to endorse. On other hand, Jeremy Waldron (1999) argues that there is no justification for excluding the views of some of the existing electorate for consideration, even using minimal thresholds of reasonableness. The value of majority voting procedures crucially depends on showing respect for each actual citizen's opinion by assigning them equal weight in the decision process. Despite this difference in approach, all of these views share a commitment to grappling with the deep disagreements about moral and political matters that arise, and the view that democracy provides the most acceptable solution to these challenges by lending weight to the different perspectives at hand.

aspiration for a society in which none rules over any other." (196). Relatedly, one might see democracy as a way of life or culture where citizens recognize each other's equal authority to make claims about the rules under which they all live (Anderson 2009). In addition, social equality might have a crucial expressive component, where democratic institutions or procedures can make clear to all citizens that they have equal standing, respect, or dignity and promote common knowledge that everyone is treated equally (Anderson 2009; Christiano 1996; 2008; Darby 2018). Despite these variations, all of these possibilities share the basic claim that there is a certain normative imperative of equality, and that democracies can best realize this imperative by assigning each citizen equal political power.

E. The Importance of the Advancement of Citizens' Interests

The aforementioned accounts of democracy highlight the ways in which democracy can promote different key moral or political values, but these values are not mutually exclusive. One might hold that the welfare-promoting aspect of democracy is crucial to its justification, but also believe that it is constrained by a concern for equality or fairness. Regardless of the particular value or combination thereof that one appeals to, these accounts must also show how existing democratic institutions can plausibly realize these values if they are to serve to convince citizens to support democratic governance over its alternatives.[9]

I now proceed to argue that in order for democracies to promote any of the values identified by these accounts, democratic citizens must be equipped to make use of the means democracy offers them to advance their interests. My argument is similar in form to the Dominance (or Sure Thing) Principle in decision theory (Savage 1972; Titelbaum MS).

[9] Gowder (2014) makes a similar claim by arguing that democracy, as an "institutional value" must have both an evaluative *and* descriptive component. According to Gowder, democracy occupies the middle ground between abstract evaluative ideas like justice and brute descriptive facts (236). As a result, conceptions of democracy can fail by not being valuable in the ways in which its evaluative component purports to be, or by failing to track the practical extensions (i.e., the institutions it is meant to describe) (238).

According to this principle, if one act, *a*, produces a better outcome in every possible state of affairs than another act, *b*, then an agent should prefer *a* to *b,* even if the agent does not know which state of affairs has obtained. Act *a* can be said to *dominate* act *b* under such circumstances. When one option dominates another, we can rule out the dominated option even in the absence of knowledge about which particular states of affairs have obtained. Similarly, we need not identify one particular value that justifies democratic institutions in order to conclude that citizens must be equipped to advance their interests with the means that democracy offers them. In order for democratic institutions to advance *any* of the four values I discussed above, democratic citizens must be equipped to advance their interests. Given that this is the case, democratic theorists can maintain different views about the moral or political value of democracy, while accepting this conclusion. [10]

One part of my claim that is worth clarifying is that citizens should be equipped to advance their *interests.* I contrast interests here with objects of desires, which people can express a subjective pull toward, but which may or may not contribute to their well-being, or which may stand in tension with other goals and commitments they have. For example, addicts may have a *desire* for their drug of choice, but in some cases, acquiring more of that drug may not be in their *interest* because they do not endorse that desire, or it hinders goals and commitments they have in another domain. I appeal to this distinction in order to highlight the sense in which we can be mistaken about what is in our interests, even when aware of our desires.[11]

[10] Of course, it is possible that democratic institutions might fail to promote these values for other reasons, even when citizens are especially well equipped to advance their interests. One reason is that it is possible that the connection between democratic institutions and the moral and political values identified by theorists may only apply within a particular range of circumstances. For example, in societies with a weak set of state institutions and low degrees of social trust, it might be that instituting democratic institutions without first addressing those challenges may fail to promote equality or fair compromise, and actually exacerbate existing imbalances of power. For these reasons, I am only identifying one important condition and make no claim to have identified a set of sufficient conditions for promoting these values through democracy.

[11] This is not to claim that we are infallible about our desires and their objects. But, even if we were, we would not be infallible about our interests. Thank you to Johann Hariman for helping me to clarify this point.

Furthermore, one can accept this distinction without also accepting the much stronger claim that there are unique, determinate sets of interests that we can identify for any given citizen or set of citizens.[12] Even while avoiding strong claims about determinate, identifiable interests, we can still recognize the potential for conflict or tension between citizens' desires and the values, commitments, goals, and behavioral tendencies that underlie those desires, which are reasonable indicators of what their interests might be.[13] On that basis, we can recognize improvements (or impediments) to the ability to determine and advance one's goals and values, without settling on a particular conception or procedure for determining what is in a given person's interest.[14] As a result, we can rely on the more modest claim that citizens have a stake in advancing goals, values, etc. that may not correspond to the objects of their desires at a particular time. This might result from a systematic misunderstanding of empirical realities, failures of instrumental reasoning, failures to recognize conflicts between desires or goals, as well as other phenomena. Insofar as there are indicators of such phenomena in a given situation, then citizens face some challenges to identifying what their interests might be and how to advance them.

Another key part of my claim involves the *means* that democracy offers citizens. Citizens can advance their interests by making use of the basic infrastructure of democracy, which consists of electoral mechanisms and political rights, such as free speech and freedom of assembly. This basic infrastructure provides citizens with the opportunity to influence political decision-making by voting, signing petitions, taking part in protests, and other forms of political action. However, the presence of these opportunities does not ensure that citizens are equipped to

[12] However, those who do accept stronger claims about our ability to determine agents' interests, such as defenders of objective list theories of well-being, should also feel comfortable with this distinction (e.g., Rice 2013). For another example of a stronger claim underlying a similar distinction, see Christiano (1996), who describes interests as *objectively* contributing to one's well-being (54).
[13] I discuss the potential for such tensions in greater detail in Section II of Chapter 2 of this dissertation.
[14] Similarly, we can assess decision-making heuristics based on indicators like simplicity and accuracy in a particular environment without committing to a domain general ideal of rationality (e.g., Gigerenzer & Todd 1999).

make use of them to advance their interests. They may be ill-equipped, and systemically fail to do so, and in turn, democracy may fail to promote the (moral and political) values that theorists use to justify it.

For example, to promote popular sovereignty, citizens must express judgments about their interests via elections, and authorize or reject the decisions of public officials to the extent that they align with those interests. If the ways in which citizens use their political power were to promote policies that diverged from their interests, perhaps because citizens were systematically misinformed, then citizens' political activity might end up undermining their life plans and goals with public policies that hinder them. Under these circumstances, citizens' political activity would actually stand in the way of popular sovereignty because it would lack a robust connection to citizens' life plans and goals. Similarly, to promote welfare, citizens must be able to accurately signal their preferences to public officials and express their intensity to promote bargaining between different interest groups. However, if citizens were to repeatedly advance political decisions that actually undermine their other goals, or neglect their future preferences in their political judgments, then democratic decision-making could actually *decrease* their overall welfare.

We can motivate these claims with an example. Imagine going to a restaurant with the goal of having a healthy meal. If you face many barriers to learning about the ingredients of the items on the menu, and your own dietary needs, then you may end up ordering a dish that is, in fact, unhealthy for you. This would undermine your goal of having a healthy meal and decrease your welfare. Even if you managed to order a healthy meal under these conditions, it would largely be a matter of luck, rather than reflecting a robust capacity to align your decision with

your goals, and so it is difficult to see how you exercise sovereignty with your decision, as you actually have very little power over whether or not your decision advances your goal.

We can extend this analogy to a relational context to see how fairness and equality require the advancement of interests. To promote fairness, democratic decisions must be sensitive to the diversity of interests in the electorate. If some portion of the electorate were to systematically misunderstand what would be conducive to their interests, then they could unknowingly accept a compromise that places a disproportionate burden upon them relative to others. Similarly, if you go to the restaurant with your friend, but can only afford one meal for the both of you, you might have to compromise between your goal of a healthy meal and your friend's goal of ordering something that he will find delicious. If you are again unable to learn the relevant information, or perhaps are overtaken by a temporary craving, you might agree to order a meal that is completely unhealthy for you, but that your friend will find delicious, which would not be a fair compromise, assuming a baseline of equal weighting to each of your interests. Relatedly, democracies can promote equality by assigning citizens an equal say or standing. If some citizens were mistaken about their interests or how to advance them, then they would be at a disadvantage with respect to those that do, and so would actually have relatively unequal power, despite an egalitarian motivation for democracy.[15] When making a decision with your friend in our analogy, you would be at a disadvantage if he has a deeper knowledge of the menu, the culinary arts, and nutrition science, and your collective order might not take your interests into account as a result.

[15] Christiano (1996) motivates this sort of concern with appeal to a different example. Having a car can be valuable, but this largely depends on knowing how to drive and knowing the directions for getting to where one wants to go. Giving the same exact car to one person who has this information and to another who does not have this information does not ensure equality because the knowledgeable person is in a significantly better position to promote her interests relative to the other (85; 265).

As this analogy to ordering in a restaurant illustrates, citizens must be able to identify, understand, and communicate their interests in order to effectively make use of the infrastructure of democracy. If citizens are not equipped to do so, their political participation can actually work against their interests, and thereby undermine the moral and political values used to justify democratic decision-making. This line of reasoning demonstrates that, in addition to the moral considerations underlying democratic decision-making, the case for democracy also depends on epistemic considerations: how citizens make use of information to form the beliefs that guide their political participation.[16]

Democratic theorists that aim to justify democracy groups do recognize some epistemic concerns. Theorists often discuss the importance of an informed citizenry and the problems that arise when some citizens are not well informed (Schumpeter 1976; Downs 1957, Christiano 1996; Estlund 2007). There seems to be a shared recognition among many scholars of democracy that successful democracies do impose epistemic criteria on their citizens. For example, Lupia & McCubbins (1998) discuss how citizens can overcome informational challenges to make "reasoned choices", which require knowledge of the consequences of one's (political) actions to make sure that democratic decisions are well-motivated. Similarly, Goldman (1999) models the social epistemology of voting in terms of "core voter knowledge", which requires a true belief about which candidate would produce a better outcome from a given voter's point of view (323-324). We might even assess the extent to which citizens' preferences differ from a demanding ideal of "enlightened preferences", which are preferences formed under conditions of full or perfect information (Mansbridge 1983, 25; Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996, 5).

[16] My use of the term epistemic in this chapter is fairly broad. The epistemic considerations relevant to democracy include both cognitive and affective components. Citizens' affective responses can determine how citizens seek out political information and how they process it, so they are a crucial component of how citizens arrive at their political beliefs. For examples of this, see my discussion of polarization below in Section IV.

While these epistemic criteria do provide an important supplement to the basic infrastructure of democracy of electoral mechanisms and political rights, they also introduce an additional set of complications. That citizens meet some epistemic criteria in the formation of their political attitudes and behavior is important for the advancement of their interests, and the value of democracy. However, the social environment in which citizens operate can affect the processes through which they learn, reason about their interests, make decisions, and take political action. Promoting the value(s) of democracy and strengthening its justification then, also require a consideration of this social influence on whether and how citizens become informed.

III. Democratic Health

To avoid self-undermining uses of the infrastructure of democracy, democratic citizens must be informed about their own interests and how to advance them. There are two capacities involved in meeting this criterion, both of which are intimately related to the social environment in which citizens operate. The first capacity is that citizens must be able to learn and reason about their interests. This learning capacity is necessary so that citizens can orient their political activity toward their interests. Think back to the example of ordering in a restaurant. In deliberating about what you would order, it was crucial for you to know your goal: having a healthy meal. This kind of broad goal might be something that one can determine through introspection, but acting to further this interest requires a lot of additional information, such as the current state of your body, the types of ingredients in the dishes on the menu, etc. This is information that we cannot gain through introspection; we have to be able to seek it out and process it reliably. Similarly, democratic citizens must be able to learn and reason about their values, commitments, and goals, as well as their relationship to political outcomes.

The second epistemic capacity is that citizens must be able to effectively communicate about their interests with political representatives and their fellow citizens. I will discuss each of these two components in turn. First, citizens must be able to communicate about their interests with political representatives and other public officials because they do not enact policy directly in most democracies. So, in order to make sure that citizens can advance their interests, they have to be able to communicate their understanding of their interests to those who do control public policy. This can involve voting in elections according to their interests, but also taking part in advocacy and activist activities meant to influence public policy.

Second, citizens must be able to communicate with their fellow citizens about their interests. This aspect of communication is important for a few reasons. As the previous discussion of the value of democracy brought forth, citizens, and their representatives, have to be able to bargain with one another and form coalitions in order to secure enough support to enact political changes. These bargaining and coalition-building activities require the capacity to communicate with other citizens about their shared interests to identify those with whom to work with. [17] This capacity can be especially useful for facilitating the influence of minorities' interests in democracies, as coalitions can amplify their influence. For example, in the 1960s, the Rainbow Coalition formed in Chicago, which brought together members of the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and the Young Patriots Organization, among others (Williams 2013). These three organizations were comprised primarily of black Americans, Puerto Ricans, and white migrants from Appalachia respectively. Despite their different missions and membership bases, these organizations came to realize that they faced common challenges such as housing discrimination, and police harassment and violence. As minority groups, they had limited means

[17] This is not to say that shared interests necessarily exist prior to the formation of a group or coalition. It might be that some important interests are intrinsically shared or social, as I discuss at the end of this section.

to effect political change singlehandedly, but by recognizing their shared interests, they were able to coordinate their collective activity and exert a greater influence.

Relatedly, the judgments and interests of other citizens can also constrain the goals one might have when influencing policy or forming a coalition. For example, citizens of Northern Ireland voted to ratify the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998, which granted decision-making power to a Northern Irish Assembly where both Nationalists and Unionists would share power. This outcome was not the most preferred state of affairs for any party, but given the distribution of preferences among the citizenry, their most preferred outcomes were not tenable. Instead, the GFA advanced the interests of various constituencies by granting some concessions to each party, such as the release of prisoners or decommissioning of paramilitary weapons (Dixon 2018). Advancing one's own interests through such an agreement requires knowledge of the interests of others and how one's own interests align with or trade off with those of others.

A third reason to develop this communicative capacity is that citizens can actually learn about their own interests through communication with others with different perspectives. Consider the case of Patrick J. Nolan, a former Republican member of the California state assembly in the 1990s. Nolan was a "law and order" conservative who supported "tough on crime" policies, such as the death penalty and building additional prisons. However, Nolan changed his outlook after spending time in a federal prison, after being prosecuted as part of an FBI sting operation involving illegal campaign contributions. Nolan describes his experience in prison as transformative. The majority of his fellow inmates, with whom he organized religious study groups, were black and Latino, and serving time for minor drug convictions. He learned about the challenges his fellow inmates faced at the different junctures of the criminal justice

system and emerged from this experience as a prominent Republican advocate for criminal justice reform (Keller 2015).

Finally, citizens can come to form new, shared interests in virtue of interaction and communication with others. Consider Jane Mansbridge's (1983) report of her experience in a small town in Vermont that is governed via town meetings that are open to all citizens who can directly discuss and vote on legislation (without, e.g., an elected city council). Many residents of the town explain the presence of political conflict in these meetings *not* in terms of conflicting interests, but rather, as resulting from conflicting estimates of who can best pursue the common good of the town (77). In this case, the residents of the town seem to have formed a conception of shared interests that they ascribe to the town as a whole, perhaps through the communication and interaction they undergo in town meetings, rather than of particular individuals within it. Communication is required to form such a conception of shared interests in the first place, in order to form a cohesive perspective from which to reason about the town. In addition, communication about the perceived interests of the town is required to resolve conflicts about how best to advance these interests, even though the citizens do not see these conflicts as involving the resolution of conflicting interests.[18]

In summary, in order to robustly advance their interests, citizens in democracies must be able to 1) learn and reason about their interests and 2) communicate about their interests with political representatives and fellow citizens. These two capacities are also mutually reinforcing

[18] The resolution of conflicts about how to understand shared interests often calls for more inclusive discussion and reasoning about these shared interests. For example, Anderson (2003) draws on the work of Amartya Sen to argue that the improved representation of under-represented perspectives not only can advance the interests of those that have been excluded, but also can improve the representative body's ability to advance the interests of the whole population (Anderson 2003, 258-259). Anderson illustrates this point with the examples of increased representation of women in India and Northern Europe, which improves representative decision-making by including local knowledge that women are more likely to possess in virtue of their social position (252-253; 257-258). Similarly, the residents of Mansbridge's (1983) New England town are better off when they can communicate about their disagreements over how to advance the interests of their town, so that they can factor in the local knowledge from differently situated residents.

because citizens can learn about their own interests through communicating with others, and developing a better understanding of one's interests can facilitate communication. However, the extent to which citizens can develop and exercise both of these capacities is determined, in part, by their social environment. If citizens spend time seeking out information and deliberating about which political outcomes are in their best interest, they may end up with faulty conclusions if they do so in an environment with faulty access to information, or with faulty information processing. Similarly, in an environment where citizens are fiercely divided and hold biased perceptions of one another, citizens may form faulty perceptions of others' interests, and fail to communicate with one another. The social environment in which citizens operate, then, can affect whether or not citizens are properly equipped to advance their interests through the infrastructure of democracy.

The public health domain provides an illuminating analogy. Minimally, public health systems are meant to promote the individual health of members of a population (in addition to many other potential goals such as addressing inequalities of access or outcomes within the population). There are some basic requirements to make progress toward this goal. These requirements might include the basic infrastructure of a network of service providers and a means of distributing medical supplies and medication. However, this infrastructure would be insufficient for promoting health if no one in the population were to use these services, or if they were applied ineffectively. We can think of my discussion of democracy so far along similar lines. In order to realize the values that are meant to justify democracy, citizens must be able to advance their interests through democratic participation. However, the mere presence of the basic infrastructure of electoral mechanisms and political rights is insufficient for this end, as citizens can be ill-equipped to make use of this infrastructure.

An important reason why the basic public health infrastructure can be insufficient to promote health in a population is because there are *social determinants* of health. A social determinant of health is "a socially controllable factor outside the traditional health care system that is an independent partial cause of an individual's health status. Candidate examples include income, education, occupational rank, and social class" (Sreenivasan 2014). These factors can directly affect the health of individuals in the population and they can inhibit their ability to make use of the public health infrastructure to improve it. For example, individuals living in under-resourced neighborhoods and of low socioeconomic status might not have access to healthy food or convenient transit options to attend doctors' appointments. As a result, if public health officials provide only general recommendations for what an ideally healthy citizen's lifestyle would look like, they may actually fail to promote the health of these populations. Similarly, citizens' key epistemic capacities - to learn and reason about their interests and communicate about their interests with public officials and fellow citizens – can be hindered by features of the social environment, such as a lack of access to accurate information and few opportunities to productively communicate with others with different perspectives. If the social environment is such that it is difficult for citizens to develop and exercise these capacities, then they can fail to advance their interests, and the infrastructure of democracy can fail to serve its purpose.

This analogy demonstrates that the extent to which democracies can promote the moral and political values that theorists have identified depends on the epistemic capacities of their citizens. We can call the extent to which a social environment facilitates the development and exercise of these capacities its *democratic health*. Much like public health practitioners have to tailor their interventions to the particular circumstances that the members of the population face,

those who are committed to promoting the moral or political values of democracy must work to promote democratic health in ways that are sensitive to the current social environment in which citizens operate. For this reason, I turn in the next section to a discussion of the current social epistemic environment in the U.S.

IV. Social Epistemic Challenges to Democratic Health

In this section I will discuss four social epistemic *challenges* to democratic health. While my discussion in this section is largely limited to evidence from the United States, other established democracies do share many of the same features, and so the concern about democratic health that I present also applies to them to the extent that these challenges are shared.

Before considering these challenges directly, it is worth taking stock of the epistemic starting point of citizen communication – what citizens know. Scholars of political information often lament the fact that many citizens do not know even basic facts about their political system, key social and economic facts that bear on upcoming elections, nor the policy positions defended by those running in elections (Somin 2013; Brennan 2016). There is also some evidence that inequalities of political information align with inequalities of social, political, and economic standing, which further amplifies this concern (Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996; Abrajano 2005).[19] So, one might worry, that many citizens are unable to advance their interests because they lack crucial information bearing on the political choices they face, and that this political ignorance may reinforce antecedent injustices and disadvantages.

[19] There is some debate about whether measured gaps in political knowledge on the basis of gender and race, in particular, accurately reflect the political knowledge of women and members of racial minority groups. For example, Abrajano (2014) attributes racial differences in political knowledge measurement to differential item functioning, whereby respondents interpret survey questions differently according to their distinct political experiences. Jerit & Barabas (2017) find that gender-based differences in political knowledge exist, but that these differences are reduced or eliminated with exposure to information, as long as there is no significant gender gap in interest in the topic.

However, some scholars point out that there are many routes to forming accurate judgments, and the most common method of measuring political knowledge – a scale comprised of factual recall questions - may underestimate the extent to which citizens can make informed decisions (Mondak 2000; Lupia 2006; 2015; Prior & Lupia 2008). For example, citizens can make use of heuristics by listening to the testimony of opinion leaders with whom they share interests, make use of judgments of character and affective responses, rely on symbolic appeals from political campaigns, and leverage their personal experiences in political conversations (Ferejohn 1990; Rahn et al. 1990; Mondak 1993; Boudreau 2009; Lupia 2015; Cramer & Toff 2017).

There may be something of value in the basic motivation behind both of these perspectives. Political knowledge is valuable, and it can be useful to have ready access to key facts about major political institutions, as well as influential political figures and organizations, in order to form one's own judgments. However, given the complexity of the political climate of most democracies, and the tradeoffs of political learning with other goals citizens must pursue, no citizen will be able to amass all of the relevant information to form their own judgment on every issue. So, no citizen is ever *fully* informed, and every citizen must rely on some heuristics and on learning from others at the time of their political engagement. While the degree of a citizen's relevant political knowledge may affect how they navigate their social epistemic environment, all citizens are vulnerable to the challenges in this section, and they cannot be ameliorated solely through increased access to information.

A. Polarization

Citizens often lack relevant information for their political decision-making, so political learning is important for democratic health. However, the social environment in which citizens

learn and process information can affect what information citizens are exposed to, and how that information is processed. Even when presented with opportunities to engage in political learning, citizens can face further challenges in a political environment characterized by polarization, which takes two main forms: ideological and affective.

Ideological polarization is the increasing divergence of political attitudes toward ideological extremes (Fiorina & Abrams 2008, 566; Druckman et al. 2013, 57). Typically, it is measured via surveys of policy preferences among citizens or the political behavior of elites, like congressional voting. There is some debate among political scientists about the degree of ideological polarization among elites and voters in the U.S., and the amount of concern it warrants.[20] However, even opposing sides of this debate agree that ideological polarization among political elites has increased since World War II, and there is some evidence that the behavior of political parties and party activists reflects this increase (Layman, Carsey & Horowitz 2006, 96-97; Fiorina & Abrams 2008, 581).

Affective polarization, rather than focusing on policy preferences or ideological commitments, "refers to a tendency to dislike and distrust the opposition and to impute negative characteristics to them" (Levendusky 2017, 59). Affective polarization is often measured via survey questions asking respondents to react to the opposing party. For example, by asking respondents to what extent they associate the opposing party (or its supporters or key leaders) with particular traits, or how they would react to the prospect of a family member marrying an opposing partisan (Iyengar, Sood, & Lelkes 2012; Levendusky 2017). The extent to which citizens, and not just elites, are affectively polarized is less controversial than claims about

[20] For an example of concern about ideological polarization, see Shapiro & Bloch-Elkon (2008). For an example of skepticism about the concern over ideological polarization see Fiorina & Abrams (2008).

ideological polarization, and can occur even when citizens are uninformed about the policy commitments of different political figures and parties.

Polarization poses a social epistemic challenge to democratic health because polarized environments affect how citizens seek out and process information.[21] Partisan-leaning citizens in a polarized environment tend to diminish their exposure to opposing points of view, and thereby come to overestimate the popularity and appropriate certainty of their beliefs (Bennett & Iyengar 2008; Stroud 2008; 2010; Campbell 2016, 240-241). Partisan citizens also tend to engage in motivated reasoning when presented with new information. For example, both liberals and conservatives exhibit negative affective (i.e., feeling angry or annoyed) and cognitive (i.e., motivation to counter argue and resist change) reactions when presented with scientific information challenging their ideological commitments, leading them to express distrust in scientific authority (Hart & Nisbet 2012; Nisbet, Cooper & Garrett 2015). This tendency reinforces partisans' antecedent views and reaffirms their commitment to their partisan identities (Kahan 2013; Petersen et al. 2013). As a result of these effects on information exposure and processing, even individuals putting forth high levels of cognitive effort are driven toward beliefs that are consistent with partisan alignments, rather than forming judgments that are responsive to the relevant evidence.

These effects pose a challenge to democratic health because they limit individuals' exposure to (unbiased) information and limit their ability to learn about their interests in an unbiased fashion.[22] So, citizens may find it difficult to determine when their interests diverge

[21] Even those who are not concerned ideological polarization can recognize the challenge posed by affective polarization for the reasons I list here.

[22] The extent to which a particular information source or reasoning process is biased can, of course, come in degrees. To put things explicitly in terms of degrees, rather than a binary notion, we can think of biases as factors that reduce the robustness of citizens' political learning and reasoning. Learning and reasoning processes are biased to the extent that they are sensitive to factors that do not bear on advancing citizens' interests. As a result, these processes are less reliable routes to accurate beliefs and correspondence between citizens' political activity and their interests.

from their partisan affiliation, which hinders the epistemic capacity of learning and reasoning about one's interests. Citizens' communicative capacities are also hindered by polarization because it limits their ability to successfully communicate across partisan divides, as citizens may find exposure to disagreement unpleasant, and the reception of what is communicated can be distorted due to biased processing when crosscutting contact actually does happen (Green, Viser & Tetlock 2000; Mutz 2006).

B. Ethnocentrism

Polarization is characterized by increasing distance between partisan groups, which is an especially salient form of group conflict in politics. Another key social epistemic challenge, ethnocentrism, reinforces group divides on a more fundamental level. By ethnocentrism, I refer to a "predisposition to divide the human world into in-groups and out-groups" and "a readiness to act in favor of in-groups and in opposition to out-groups" (Kinder & Kam 2010, 8). Empirical research, most importantly the work of Donald Kinder and Cindy Kam, provides evidence that ethnocentric predispositions are an important determinant of political attitudes for a subset of the U.S. population. This is worrisome from the perspective of democratic health because the existence of such dispositions makes citizens susceptible to manipulation on that basis. Ethnocentric citizens can form political attitudes based on prejudice at the expense of evidence about their interests and the expected consequences of political policies. Under these circumstances, it is more difficult for citizens to robustly understand and act to advance their interests.

Kinder & Kam (2010) show that ethnocentrism is associated with particular attitudes toward foreign policy, immigration, LGBT rights, social programs, and race relations. For example, the ethnocentric disposition in favor of the ingroup and against the outgroup leads

Americans to support violent confrontation in the foreign policy domain, leads white Americans to oppose immigration, and heterosexual Americans to oppose LGBT rights (Kinder & Kam 2010, 103-104; 149; 159-160). Importantly, ethnocentric dispositions do not make these political attitudes inevitable. Instead, these dispositions are activated by different frames with which political issues are presented. For example, ethnocentric white Americans are driven to favor cuts to means tested welfare programs, such as SNAP or TANF, but support increases in spending on social security and Medicare. The former are seen as primarily benefiting racial minorities, and hence opposition to them can be triggered when prejudice against an outgroup is activated (185-194).

In the U.S. context, ethnocentric dispositions are especially consequential when political issues take on a racialized frame, which activates these dispositions. Research on the perception of policies under the Obama administration demonstrates a similar prejudicial disposition in a wide variety of domains. Michael Tesler and David Sears document the phenomenon of racial spillover, which occurs when racialized evaluations in one domain extend to an associated domain (Tesler & Sears 2010, 77). In particular, they show that voters' attitudes toward tax policy and toward Barack Obama's opponents (Clinton and McCain) changed as then candidate Obama became associated with them, and that racial resentment was a strong predictor of voters' attitudes only after this association was established (78-93).[23] Observed racial spillover effects continued under Obama's presidency as more policies became associated with him. These effects were especially pronounced when voters had weakly held views, often in domains where partisanship was less salient (Tesler 2015, 109).[24] Under these conditions, the domain of

[23] Tesler (2016) even finds in later work that ethnocentrism was activated during the 2008 election because of false beliefs about Obama's religion, as voters were driven to oppose him by anti-Muslim prejudice (18).
[24] It is worth noting, that as a result, these effects were most pronounced among white Democrats, showing that ethnocentric dispositions cut across partisan lines (Tesler 2015, 112).

racialized evaluation expanded for prejudicial white voters as more policies came to be associated with Obama, such that this phenomenon has a wide scope.

Ethnocentrism poses a challenge to democratic health because it can influence citizens' political attitudes and activities in ways that diverge from the exercise of their epistemic capacities, and the advancement of their interests. Policy preferences influenced by ethnocentric dispositions depend on associations that citizens form between a policy and the relevant ingroup or outgroup, which may not be empirically justified. In addition, citizens who oppose a particular policy because it has become associated with an outgroup may then fail to consider how the policy contributes to their own interests. Ethnocentric dispositions also hinder the advancement of citizens' interests by public officials because they enable manipulation. If a campaign or political issue is framed in a way that activates ethnocentric dispositions, some citizens will then act on this disposition, without considering other evidence about what would be in their interests or the likely effects of a given policy choice. Finally, ethnocentrism disrupts the exercise of citizens' communicative capacity to form coalitions. When ethnocentrism influences political behavior, shared interests between opposed groups can go unidentified, and can fail to be advanced.

C. Populism

In addition to ethnocentrism, which operates at a fundamental dispositional level, there are other politically motivated divisions that present social epistemic challenges to democratic health. Populism is an important example of such a challenge. While the term 'populist' is used in a variety of different ways, I focus here on a particular kind of narrative and rhetorical style deployed in politics, which introduces a social epistemic challenge when it becomes pervasive and influential.

Populism, as it has come to be defined in recent work in political theory, is an anti-elite and antipluralist approach to political representation (Müller 2016, 2-4). It is antipluralist, in the relevant sense, in that populists tend to see some subset of the population as the true or pure people that are deserving of representation, while rejecting those that fall outside this criterion as illegitimate (25-27). This criterion can take diverse forms, such as a specific ethnoracial identity at the exclusion of perceived foreigners or a specific class identity. What is crucial from a social epistemic perspective is that this exclusionary antipluralism often relies on symbolic claims that resist or reject empirical testing. Jan-Werner Müller defends this claim:

> "What distinguishes democratic politicians from populists is that the former make representative claims in the form of something like hypotheses that can be empirically disproven on the basis of the actual results of regular procedures and institutions like elections…Populists, by contrast, will persist with their representative claim no matter what; because their claim is of a moral and symbolic – not an empirical – nature, it cannot be disproven" (Müller 2016, 39).

By making use of symbolic appeals to the moral purity of the people, populists insulate themselves from empirical refutation and diminish the importance of information about the interests of different constituencies.

A specific set of rhetorical practices has, historically, been useful to make these symbolic appeals (Kazin 1995).[25] Populist language highlights the virtues of the common or "real" people and juxtaposes it with the corruption of elites (Kazin 1995, 2; 16; 93; 110). Furthermore, populist narratives usually maintain that only the populist party or movement, and its leader, can properly represent the people and their interests (Müller 2016). If populists are the only legitimate representatives of the true people, and the people can never be wrong, then the particular policy pronouncements need not be empirically vetted or evidentially supported; they serve as a

[25] Kazin himself is a defender of the utility of populism and he does not think it is an inherent evil to be avoided, but rather a flexible language of persuasion that can be used for different ends (2-3; 292).

symbolic refutation of the corrupted elite and outsiders.[26] This kind of narrative is often persuasive, and populists exploit its persuasive power to gain supporters. However, in so doing, populists also pollute the social environment with an epistemic danger.

What is dangerous about populist narratives, even if they can be used for a variety of ends, is that they obscure the heterogeneity of interests of the citizenry.[27] When referring to the people in monolithic and exclusionary terms, it can become difficult to acknowledge disagreement among the citizenry that must be negotiated. Competing perspectives can be dismissed as corrupted or threatening, rather than positions held by civic partners with which to bargain and from which to learn. Most immediately, when representatives take on this perspective, citizens who are excluded by the populist party will have limited means of communicating about their interests to their representatives.

However, the pervasiveness of populist narratives can also threaten the epistemic condition of those they take themselves to represent. When reasoning along populist lines, citizens can miss out on learning about their own interests by failing to communicate with one another. Citizens on different sides of social cleavages may have different epistemic starting points. In these cases, communication across social divides, including those populists see as the division between pure and corrupted, can lead to a reconsideration of one's interests, as in the case of Patrick Nolan discussed above. Relatedly, such communication can be helpful in spurring reconsideration of how best to advance one's interests, given the interests of others, so as to

[26] It is worth noting that populist rhetoric and narratives have been used by both left- and right-wing political movements, and so populism should not be understood as tied to a particular ideology or set of policies. Kazin (1995) documents how left-wing political movements (e.g., labor unions) were the primary employers of populist language in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century in the U.S., until a shift in the 1960s led to a right wing adoption of the strategy (Chapter 9). In addition, populist narratives continue to be employed by left- and right-wing leaders in different parts of the world, such as Venezuela and Hungary (Müller 2016).

[27] This danger is a feature of populist *rhetoric*, which can also be deployed by individuals and groups that are not typically classified as populist.

reach a tenable agreement and avoid costly social conflict, as in the case of the Good Friday Agreement discussed above. By obscuring the genuine heterogeneity of citizens' interests, populist narratives make this kind of information more difficult to incorporate into citizens' political reasoning, and diminish the importance of the communication needed to acquire it. As a result, an environment where populist narratives are pervasive is not conducive to the development and exercise of citizens' epistemic capacities.

D. The Difficulty of Communication Across Social Identity Groups

Part of the challenge posed by populist narratives is that they can be convincing for many citizens, but stand in tension with the importance of communication with others. In contexts where social identities are especially salient, communication and deliberation across different identity groups can be challenging even in the absence of populist narratives. Different social identity groups endure different sets of experiences, have limited contact, and as a result, can have such different perspectives that communication is hindered.[28] This poses a social epistemic challenge to democratic health because citizens can fail to learn from and communicate with one another when their claims are misunderstood.

Mendelberg and Oleske's (2000) research on town hall deliberation provides a useful case study involving racial identity in the U.S. They conducted observations of municipal town halls in New Jersey and found that white residents repeatedly misunderstood and dismissed minority residents' concerns about racial discrimination related to school district integration. Opponents of school district integration, which were predominantly white, often appealed to racially coded language, such as "neighborhood schools", in making their claims (176-179).

[28] Some scholars catalogue the ways in which partisan identity operates as a social identity, so these two challenges may share some of the same mechanisms (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002). However, my discussion of polarization above focuses on the effects of an ideological and/or affective orientation toward supporters of different political parties, while in this section, I focus on difficulties of communication that arise between those with different informational and experiential starting points due to their social group membership.

While this language taken in isolation might seem race neutral, in context, these arguments often amounted to claims that African American and Hispanic students would threaten the community and life chances of the residents of their neighboring district (182). In this racially divided environment, any criticism of the integration proponent's school district came to be seen as criticism of racial minorities, while integration opponents refused to consider the relevance of race to the discussion (184-185). As a result, the two opposing sides were not able to productively engage in discussion because each side saw the other as fundamentally misunderstanding their position and use of language. In addition, important issues related to the racial divide were not taken up for discussion, while evidence and reasoning played a self-serving role as the parties became angry and defensive (185).

While this case study is particularly illustrative of the difficulty of communicating across social identity groups, it is not an isolated incident. Political attitudes in the U.S. today differ widely on the basis of race, especially in domains where race is especially salient (Lopez, Passel & Rohal 2015, 53; Morin & Stepler 2016; Parker, Horowitz & Mahl 2016). For some issues, e.g., perceptions of police brutality, personal experience is an especially important determinant of attitudes (Carsey 1995; Weitzer & Tuch 1999). However, in this kind of domain, personal experiences will often differ substantially for citizens of different races, which makes successful communication especially important.

In addition, white and black citizens differ in their perceptions of racism and the weight they assign to information pertaining to these perceptions. The implications of an admission of the existence of racism further drive these disparities in the self-image of white and black people (Carter & Murphy 2015; Unzueta & Lowery 2008). These disparities motivate differing conceptions of racism, as white citizens are motivated to adopt notions of racism centered on

individual attitudes to avoid admitting of any structural advantages of being white (Carter & Murphy 2015, 276). Black citizens may even face disincentives to share their perspective, as attributions of discrimination are associated with negative social evaluations (Kaiser & Miller 2001).

These divergences of information, perspective, and motivation create the conditions for similar difficulties of communication as in the New Jersey town halls. The different experiences and perspectives that people of different identifies bring to bear on political decision-making can affect the information they will find relevant, as well as the conclusions they reach. For this reason, sharing information across lines of identity can be helpful in forming political judgments about how one's own interests align with those of others, and the tradeoffs relevant to different political proposals. Communication across social identities can lead to the reevaluation of misinformed beliefs and encourage consideration of issues that would otherwise be given little weight. For example, some of the integration opponents in the New Jersey town hall, plausibly, did not even see how opposition to school integration could be perceived as racist. However, due to the vast divide in perspective and language, the communication across these different groups failed, and the importance of racial inequality and discrimination to this issue could not be properly taken up in their decision-making. Under these conditions, some citizens may fail to grasp some of the costs or expected consequences of the policies they support, as would be the case if citizens made decisions with unjustified beliefs about the nature and degree of racism.

In summary, the difficulty of communication across social identity poses a social epistemic challenge for two reasons. First, it makes it more difficult for citizens to access information about members of other social groups, and thereby limits the reevaluation of unjustified or misinformed beliefs. In addition, without this communication, citizens are in a

worse position to take into account the consequences of their political decisions when forming judgments about their own interests, and how they may or may not be shared with others for the purposes of building coalitions.

E. Key Takeaways

The four social epistemic challenges that I have summarized affect both more and less politically informed citizens; so epistemic challenges cannot be reduced to a problem of mere ignorance. [29] Even citizens with a great deal of politically relevant knowledge can be affected by biased processing due to polarization or be manipulated on the basis of ethnocentric dispositions (Lodge & Taber 2013, Chapter 7; Miller, Sanders & Farhart 2016; Kahan et al. 2017).[30] Furthermore, insofar as healthy democracies require communication *between* citizens, and these challenges inhibit that communication, then the democratic health of the social epistemic environment inhabited by all citizens is threatened.

To summarize the argument from this section: many citizens do not have much political knowledge and the extent to which different citizens are politically informed is relevant for democratic health. However, the four social epistemic challenges to democratic health I have discussed are troubling features of the *environment* in which citizens operate, so they serve as background conditions for citizen's political learning and engagement, and can affect all citizens. Polarization, ethnocentrism, populism, and difficulties of communication across social groups all threaten the development of citizens' key epistemic capacities of (1) learning about and

[29] By referring to these phenomena as challenges, I do not mean to suggest that partisan, ethnocentric, populist, or social identity group cues can *never* be informative. There are cases where such social cleavages do represent genuine divergences of interests and tradeoffs that cannot be avoided. However, even in those cases, these phenomena threaten to diminish exposure to, or reasoning about, other key forms of information or learning experiences, such as the information and experience that can be gained via communication that cuts across these cleavages.

[30] Lodge & Taber (2013) find that higher knowledge individuals are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when evaluating arguments challenging their preferred view, while Miller, Sanders & Farhart (2016) find that more politically knowledgeable individuals (who also lack trust) are more susceptible to ideological conspiracy theories. Similarly, Kahan et al. (2017) find that partisans with high numeracy use their cognitive ability to form identity-protective beliefs (i.e., interpreting quantitative information in a way that affirms their partisan attachment), thereby increasing political polarization.

identifying their interests and (2) communicating their interests to political representatives and fellow citizens. As a result, these conditions inhibit the extent to which citizens can advance their interests through the infrastructure of democracy – electoral mechanisms and political rights – and thereby limit the extent to which the moral or political value(s) of democracy can be realized through these means.

V. Epistemic Accounts of Democracy

In Section II, I discussed various accounts of the value of democracy, all of which focused on non-epistemic values. However, many democratic theorists also justify democracy in virtue of its *epistemic* value. If democratic decision-making and institutions themselves have epistemic value, then it might be that the epistemically valuable features of democracy can be leveraged to address concerns about democratic health. In this section I will argue, however, that these accounts do not provide sufficient guidance for how to address the social epistemic challenges I have identified.

Democratic theorists argue for the epistemic value of democracy with appeal to two related features of democratic decision-making: aggregation and deliberation. Aggregation can be a source of epistemic value of democracy by harnessing the information that is dispersed among citizens and bringing it to bear on political decisions. While no individual citizen has access to all of the relevant information bearing on a political decision, the democratic process as a whole can collect this information through the political participation of differently situated citizens. The Condorcet Jury Theorem (CJT) is commonly marshaled to defend this line of reasoning (Grofman, Owen & Feld 1983; Grofman & Feld 1988; List & Goodin 2001; Farrelly 2012; Landemore 2017, 70-75, 150-156). This theorem has two basic conditions: voters must meet a certain threshold of competence (e.g., at least a 0.5 chance of voting accurately) and their

votes must be sufficiently independent.[31] When these conditions are met, the accuracy of the group's decision via majority rule quickly approaches 1 as the size of the group increases. With this appeal to the CJT, some theorists argue that by aggregating the judgments of a large number of citizens with a majority decision procedure, democracies can make reliably accurate decisions.

The potential epistemic value of the aggregation function of democracy is not particularly helpful for addressing the four social epistemic challenges to democratic health. This is because these challenges can limit the competence of citizens by making it more challenging to learn about and identify their interests. For example, citizens operating in a polarized environment are less competent at identifying their interests when led astray by biased information processing, or when their political behavior is influenced by ethnocentric predispositions. Under these conditions, the reliability of citizens' political judgments can be greatly reduced, as the beliefs guiding voting behavior are determined by partisan commitments or ethnocentric predispositions. When this is the case, local knowledge may not be reflected in voting behavior, and so may not be aggregated for collective epistemic benefit. In fact, aggregating incompetent votes can further compound errors for an especially unreliable collective judgment. While there are other grounds on which to question the applicability of the CJT to contemporary democracies, the main problem in this context is that the epistemic value of the inputs to aggregation is greatly diminished when democratic health is low. It seems, then, that addressing

[31] The independence condition requires voters' votes to be *independent events*. We can state this requirement in terms of conditional probabilities: for two voters *A* and *B*, the votes of *A* and *B* are independent only if the probability that *A* votes correctly is equal to the probability that *A* votes correctly given that *B* votes correctly (Estlund 1994, 131). However, there is some debate about what conditions are required to meet the independence condition of the CJT while preserving the accuracy benefits of vote aggregation under majority rule. For example, Grofman & Feld (1988) argue that independence requires that individual vote choices not be "positively correlated with one another beyond the correlation to be expected from similarities in competence alone" (571). This view allows that voters might be similarly competent in similar situations, but the choices of voters should not influence one another. Estlund (1994) is more permissive and argues that a version of the theorem is compatible with some deference by voters to opinion leaders.

these social epistemic challenges, and increasing the democratic health of the citizenry, can serve as a precondition to realizing the epistemic value of aggregation.

The second feature of democratic decision making of potential epistemic value is deliberation.[32] One way that deliberation can be valuable is by subjecting moral and political proposals to rational scrutiny, while serving as a process of discovering which proposals are true or justified. The decision making process that results is meant to be sensitive to the interests of all by allowing all citizens (or all perspectives) to participate with equal standing (Nino 1996, 119-120; Bohman 2006). The set of political rights and institutions typical of democracy facilitate these deliberative processes. Freedom of information and expression provide a framework in which different perspectives can be introduced to the public sphere, as well as different pieces of evidence in support or against these perspectives. Many democratic theorists use these considerations to argue that our individual interest in believing the truth, especially in moral and political matters, should lead us to support democratic institutions, as they provide the necessary background for truth-discovery (Buchanan 2002; 2004; Misak 2000; 2004; Talisse 2008; 2009; 2010; Misak & Talisse 2014).

Democracy has this epistemic value because it encourages truth-conducive deliberative processes. So, one might argue, that democratic health might best be improved by providing more opportunities for citizen deliberation. For example, we could follow Ackerman and Fishkin's (2004) proposal for a public holiday for citizens to deliberate with their neighbors in anticipation of elections. If carried out successfully, such a proposal would seem to advance the

[32] The epistemic value of deliberation is related to the value of aggregation in that deliberation is meant to allow citizens to advance different proposals and subject them to scrutiny. Some theorists, such as Landemore (2017), do appeal to the epistemic value of both features.

epistemic capacities of citizens by providing a forum for citizens to communicate with one another and representatives of political parties.

While there are some useful insights to be gleaned from theories of deliberation, they do not provide an adequate response to poor democratic health because deliberation under these circumstances can actually be counterproductive. For example, under conditions of polarization, deliberation can actually serve to reinforce partisan divides and push citizens further to partisan extremes, rather than provide a forum for good faith discussion and scrutiny (Sunstein 2009). In addition, in contexts with salient divisions between social groups, deliberation may fail with repeated miscommunication or even a systematic lack of uptake of the claims made by members of some groups. Under these non-ideal social epistemic conditions, citizens may fail to properly engage with one another's viewpoints when engaged in deliberation, and the perspectives of disadvantaged groups might be undervalued (Sanders 1997; Mendelberg & Oleske 2000; Young 2001). While deliberation can be epistemically useful, its value is context-dependent, and its success conditions are fragile (Mendelberg 2002). Rather than ameliorating the challenge to democratic health, then, deliberation might exacerbate the problem, or at least fail to be effective, under non-ideal conditions. So, encouraging deliberation alone is not an adequate remedy to the social epistemic challenges to democratic health.

One might agree that aggregation and deliberation on their own do not provide an adequate remedy to social epistemic challenges to democratic health, but also maintain that when they are implemented together, in an iterative process, they can contribute to democratic health. For example, both deliberation and aggregation derive their epistemic value, at least in part, from the diversity of perspectives and sources of information among democratic citizens. Citizens must respond to the reasons and considerations raised by others in the process of deliberation and

receive information from other citizens through aggregative processes like voting. John Dewey (1916) recognizes the epistemic import of diversity for democracy and argues that one source of democracy's value as its capacity to expose citizens to a "diversity of stimuli." It is possible that the processes of aggregation and deliberation, conducted repeatedly over time would continually expose citizens to diverse perspectives and information. Dewey argues that this diverse exposure can lead citizens to consider how their actions relate to the actions of their fellow citizens, and vice versa, which can help to break down social barriers like class and race (87). The erosion of social barriers of this kind could then diminish some of the challenging effects of ethnocentrism, populism, and the difficulty of communication across social divisions. So, while particular implementations of aggregation and deliberation may not always be productive under conditions of poor democratic health, it might be that continuous exposure to diverse information and perspectives via aggregation and deliberation may ameliorate some challenges to democratic health.

I am very sympathetic to this line of thinking, as it recognizes aggregation and deliberation as useful tools for democracy, without treating either as a panacea for the social epistemic challenges I have identified above. However, I do not think that the success of such iterative processes is explained by the combination of aggregation and deliberation alone. Exposure to diversity via aggregative and deliberative processes can also lead to retrenchment of social cleavages and rejections of future exposure. In order for such exposure to succeed and persist over time, citizens need to be able to engage in such processes in ways that avoid such responses, and can harness their potential for epistemic improvement. For example, in the case from Mendelberg & Oleske (2000) that I discussed above, the difficulty of communicating between social identity groups made deliberation in town halls on school desegregation

unsuccessful, and left attendees frustrated. In order for those citizens to benefit from the epistemic value of democracy, understood as an iterative process, some among them would have to diagnose the situation, and take action in order to prevent future interactions from leading to the same outcome. More generally, this example points to the need for guidance about the relationship between aggregative and deliberative institutions and the individual habits that can maintain them, while harnessing their benefits.

VI. Epistemic Civic Virtue

I argued in the last section that appeals to aggregation and deliberation do not provide a sufficient response to the empirical realities of the social epistemic challenges to democratic health. In this section, I will propose a theoretical framework that can guide efforts to respond to the social epistemic challenges identified above at both the individual and social level. To do so, I borrow a notion from the republican tradition of political theory – civic virtue – and make use of it in a distinctively epistemic manner.

A. What is Civic Virtue?

Civic virtue, in the republican tradition, refers to a set of dispositions that lead citizens to further the public good (Dagger 1997, 14). Republicans typically understand the public good to involve securing citizens' freedom, which enables them to govern their own lives and to be protected from the arbitrary influence of others. Securing citizen's freedom requires certain habits among the citizenry so that their interests and judgments can guide the operations of government, and serve as a check on the power of the state. These habits can involve, for example, active participation in political affairs, the ability to cooperate with and build solidarity

with one's peers, and a respect for the rights of others and the laws that protect these rights (Sandel 1996; Dagger 1997; Pettit 1997; Hadenius 2001; Bellamy 2007; Gourevitch 2015).[33]

Virtuous habits are necessary for securing the motivating value for republican theorists – freedom – and since political freedom is achieved at a collective level, supporting the civic virtue of individuals is a matter of public interest. For example, Sandel (1996) argues that the republican conception of freedom "requires a formative politics" such that citizens are given the resources and opportunities to develop civic virtue and sustain self-government. Social and political institutions must *actively encourage* a culture of civic virtue for it to take hold and be sustained over time. A healthy culture of civic virtue then reinforces these social and political institutions and sustains democracy such that democratic institutions and individual practices are mutually reinforcing (Hadenius 2001, 2-3). Individual epistemic practices are influenced by social and political conditions and since democracies empower citizens, these practices can also influence social and political conditions in turn.

It is worth noting that the cultivation of civic virtue is not carried out solely through the state. Republican theorists often appeal to the importance of popular associations, such as community organizations, unions, and professional associations. These associations serve this role by, e.g., collecting and spreading political information and resources in order to coordinate collective action and advance shared interests (Hadenius 2001, Chapter 2).

[33] Different authors in the republican tradition have developed different accounts of what civic virtue entails, which vary with the broader goals of their theories. For example, Dagger (1997) argues that a republican concern for freedom can accommodate a liberal scheme of individual rights while avoiding some costs of atomistic individualism, and so his account of civic virtue focuses on a respect for rights. Similarly, Pettit (1997), Hadenius (2001), and Bellamy (2007) are concerned with the role that a democratic public with civic virtue can play in upholding a republican social and political order, and providing a check on state power, so their conceptions of civic virtue focus on norms of active political participation and respect for freedom. Gourevitch (2015) argues that labor republicans in the 19th century U.S. understood civic virtue in terms of practices of cooperation and solidarity to defend workers from domination in the workplace; this is also discussed in Chapter 6 of Sandel (1996).

The republican notion of civic virtue is a useful starting point for addressing social epistemic challenges to democratic health because it captures three important components of the problem. First, the notion of civic virtue captures a necessary condition of the realization of the value of democracy, which I previously identified – the importance of advancing citizens' interests through the political infrastructure. Civic virtue is valuable because it allows citizens to effectively promote their interests through their political participation, as well as to recognize and guard against threats to their interests.

Second, the notion of civic virtue also captures the importance of developing citizens' *capacities*. Civic virtue is necessary because a set of institutions is insufficient for realizing a key political value, freedom, and so citizens must have the right habits to make use of these institutions. This aligns nicely with the recognition that the advancement of interests through the infrastructure of democracy depends on the exercise of citizens' epistemic capacities: to learn about and identify their interests, and to communicate about them to representatives and fellow citizens.

Finally, the notion of civic virtue captures the interdependence of citizens' habits and the environment in which they operate. A republican political system is meant to encourage civic virtue through formal political institutions as well as secondary associations. However, the value of this system in turn depends on the continued development of civic virtue to sustain it. Neither the social and institutional structure nor the habits of the citizenry are enough on their own to safeguard republican freedom. With this claim, republican theorists both recognize how political behavior is socially determined, and make use of this relationship between the social environment and individual habits to uphold their political system. For example, a robust culture of active participation in labor unions may help to encourage workers to take part in local politics

through the union's endorsements and organizational structure. Through this political engagement, workers can advance their interests in preserving labor laws and improving labor conditions. In order to do this, these workers must develop certain capacities, such as how to organize rallies or how to recognize violations of their labor contracts. These capacities can be taught as part of union membership. However, the continued survival of the union, and its continued ability to serve this role, depends on the active and effective participation of its members. Since the habits involved in active and effective participation are developed through the organizational structure and culture of the union, these two features are interdependent.

This last claim about the interdependence between citizens' habits and the environment in which they operate is especially important for addressing the shortcomings of appeals to the value of aggregation and deliberation. This is because features of the citizenry itself contribute to challenges to democratic health, just as those challenges, as features of the social environment, prevent the citizenry from developing their epistemic capacities. For example, ethnocentrism remains a challenge to democratic health because citizens have ethnocentric predispositions that can be activated. When political actors then take advantage of these dispositions to influence political attitudes and behavior, their actions can also serve to pollute the social epistemic environment and hinders citizens' epistemic capacities to advance their interests. However, there are background features that also exacerbate this problem, such as a lack of contact between social groups, which allows ingroup/outgroup biases to flourish, and maintains incentives for elites to take advantage of these predispositions. To address these challenges, then, it may be helpful to target interventions both at individual practices and at institutional or environmental factors, as they are both contributory causes to poor democratic health.

In virtue of this descriptive adequacy, a conception of civic virtue can also provide better action-guidance than alternative epistemic accounts of democracy. This interdependence shows that the promotion of democratic health requires intervention at the social and institutional level, as well as the level of individual practices. In addition, the relevant interventions cannot be the same for all contexts given this interdependence. Instead, individual virtuous actors and groups must be attuned to the different challenges and existing state of affairs in which they operate in order to properly calibrate their actions according to those circumstances, just as different kinds of popular associations and political participation may be necessary in the face of different kinds of threats to republican freedom.

Unlike traditional republican theory, however, my concern here is with social epistemic threats to democratic health, rather than fundamentally moral ones (though, of course, these epistemic considerations have moral implications). This should allow a wider array of theorists and stakeholders to adopt this view, as it is compatible with a variety of candidate values or interests to be promoted through democratic institutions.

B. What Makes Epistemic Civic Virtue 'Epistemic'?

One might find the preceding argument in favor of civic virtue compelling, but wonder how the translation to an epistemic conception of civic virtue is supposed to work. While a detailed account of epistemic civic virtue and how it can be promoted in contemporary democracies is outside of the scope of this chapter, I will mention a few key parameters here.

In Section III I argued that democratic health requires two epistemic capacities from citizens: (1) the ability to learn and reason about their interests and (2) the ability to effectively communicate about their interests to political representatives and their fellow citizens. Epistemic civic virtue must consist in habits and practices that help citizens develop and exercise these

capacities, given the environment in which they operate. Furthermore, due to the interdependence of the social and institutional context and individual practices, promoting epistemic civic virtue also requires interventions with respect to the background conditions of civic life to promote these capacities. Two examples might help to illustrate what epistemic civic virtue requires and how it can be developed, given these parameters

One way in which social epistemic challenges hinder citizens' epistemic capacities is by limiting exposure to alternative perspectives and the rejection of their legitimacy (e.g., through populist rhetoric). Citizens are then ill equipped to notice when the policies promoted by their favored party or representatives diverge from their interests and to recognize when their interests align with those with alternative perspectives. Citizens with epistemic civic virtue should recognize these failures of communication and take steps to put themselves in a position to rectify them. A helpful illustration of this point is the work of Ayaz Virji, a doctor in rural Minnesota, who is also Muslim. Virji takes part in public speaking engagements in various towns across Minnesota where he gives lectures and answers questions from the audience about Islam. In many cases, the residents of these towns have had few, if any, interactions with Muslims, and sometimes ask very basic questions, such as "[d]o the majority of Muslims tolerate/respect other religions?" (McCrummen 2017).

By taking on these speaking engagements, Virji exposes his fellow citizens to a set of narratives and information, which is difficult for other citizens to access in the presence of social epistemic challenges, such as the difficult communicating across lines of social identity. In so doing, he can dispel false beliefs about Islam, and help others to see that islamophobia is not necessarily in their interest. This habit of recognizing impediments to learning and communication, and trying to address them, provides a good example of epistemic civic virtue.

We can imagine others taking up this kind of activity, which would help citizens to develop their communicative capacities, and help them to reason better about their own interests by countering some of their existing biases, and introducing novel information from which to learn. In addition, those who attend these events also display epistemic civic virtue, by recognizing that they face impediments to accessing relevant information, and taking steps to remedy it by attending the lecture.

These activities are distinctively epistemic, in this case, because they contribute to the sharing of information and formation of beliefs. We can contrast this with another activity that Virji could have pursued instead, organizing an anti-islamophobia rally. Attending a rally can be an urgent and politically useful activity, but might more naturally fall under the header of non-epistemic civic virtue, as an example of an attempt to influence first-order policy debates to protect citizens' rights. However, these non-epistemic activities may have limited reach under current social epistemic conditions. Due to the presence of social epistemic challenges, such efforts can fail to reach citizens who do share overlapping interests and, in some cases, be insufficient to build a large enough coalition to effect stable change. Instead of directly engaging in first-order policy debates, Virji's efforts (and those of his audience members to a lesser degree), help set the stage for more productive political decision-making in the future (including, perhaps, increased receptivity for non-epistemic activism). By putting themselves in a better position to communicate across a social cleavage, Virji and his audience members take the first steps to building a more cohesive communicative environment where rural Minnesotans better understand Islam and are in a better position to communicate with Muslim citizens about their (shared) interests.

The case of Virji is one of an individual serving as a catalyst for improving the environment with respect to democratic health. However, epistemic civic virtue can also involve the maintenance of an existing epistemic environment. Dan Kahan's (2015) research on local action to address climate change in Southeast Florida provides a useful example of this. Kahan describes how public officials actively promote partnerships in local climate action initiatives that affirm different value commitments (e.g., environmentalists *and* business associations) and discourage ways of framing discussions that make partisan identities salient and threaten values (33-36). Under these circumstances, useful communication leading to coalition-building has been made possible on an issue that is usually quite polarized. In order to do this, local officials, and other participants in town hall meetings, need to remain vigilant about making sure that the framing of discussions is such that it does not exclude or target particular value commitments held by some stakeholders. In this way, these citizens maintain a shared, healthier epistemic space in which to discuss continued action against climate change in their community, and how their interests relate to the possible actions they can take.[34]

Of course, given the scale of contemporary challenges to democratic health, a satisfactory solution cannot be achieved solely through small scale, voluntary programs. The republican tradition rightly focuses on promoting civic *culture* and it will take no less than a large-scale shift in contemporary civic norms to fully address the problem. However, these examples demonstrate the change in perspective and strategy that epistemic civic virtue calls for. The individuals in

[34] This example is closely related to John Dewey's discussion of democracy as a way of life. He states that democracy is "a way of personal life controlled by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action *if proper conditions are furnished*" (Dewey 1988, 227, italics mine). Elizabeth Anderson (2006) expands on this point by noting that the epistemic power of democracy depends on citizens following norms that, for example, facilitate diversity and dissent (15). The way in which participants in town halls encourage certain of framing discussion of local climate initiatives an discourage others might be one example of how to furnish the proper conditions to realize the value(s) of democracy via the provision of norms. However, epistemic civic virtue also seems to involve additional activities that go beyond the provision of norms. For example, Ayaz Virji's intervention (discussed above) involved the capacity to recognize an informational challenge, seek out ways of remedying it, and productively respond to the reactions of those with whom he shares information about Islam.

these examples do not advocate a particular policy or particular political action. Instead, their target is improving the environment in which political learning, communication, and action take place. Much of contemporary activist and advocacy efforts focus on promoting first order political and moral perspectives, and while these pursuits are essential, low levels of democratic health may limit their reach. But there is no reason why civic efforts cannot be directed toward promoting certain epistemic practices, and creating expectations of citizens to participate in more productive forms of political learning. Furthermore, such efforts might also aim at larger scale institutional reforms that might further improve democratic health, such as redrawing political districts to balance partisan affiliations in order to counteract the challenges posed by polarization (Anderson 2011, 159).

The motivation for these interventions, both small and large scale, would remain *epistemic*. Accepting these arguments in favor of epistemic civic virtue does not require a commitment to a particular moral or political value that should be taken to justify democracy or to first order political interests that should be advanced within it. As a result, even competing sides of moral and political disagreements can accept its conclusions.

C. A Deliberative Democratic Objection

Advocates of deliberative democracy might respond to this argument in favor of epistemic civic virtue by pointing out that their view can also accommodate some of the benefits of an epistemic civic virtue approach. A particularly strong example is Thomas Christiano's (1996) account of democracy, in which he discusses the importance of the "cognitive conditions of citizenship." This account shares some important similarities with the argument I present in this paper, though I will identify some important differences and argue that an epistemic civic virtue approach preserves some benefits over Christiano's route to deliberative democracy.

Christiano is fundamentally a social equality theorist of democracy. His starting point is that justice requires treating everyone's interests equally and democracy is the best way of advancing everyone's interests equally, given how interdependent our interests are when deciding on collective properties of society (e.g., what kinds of public goods our society will have) (1996, 59; 78). Christiano's account takes an epistemic turn because citizens must have equal resources with which to advance their interests in order to realize the value of equality. One corollary of this requirement is that citizens must have equal resources to *learn* about their interests. The means through which citizens lean about their interests are the "cognitive conditions of citizenship" (265).

Christiano identifies *egalitarian deliberation* as the process through which these conditions are met, wherein citizens can present their judgments about the basic aims that their society should pursue, and disagreements can be discussed. This process is egalitarian in that different views are afforded equal resources for development and given equal consideration (271-272). Egalitarian deliberation is to be carried out at the societal level in advance of elections and is meant to have epistemic value as a reliable process to determine the truth about citizens' interests, and what morality or justice requires (183-186). However, Christiano does impose three adequacy conditions on the outcome of deliberation: citizens must produce judgments about the basic aims that society should pursue, which are (1) sufficiently articulate to guide policy, (2) defended with appeal to reasons rather than emotion, and (3) discriminating in that they arise from a deliberative process that considered many different perspectives (188-190).

One can make use of Christiano's view to make sense of the social epistemic challenges to democratic health I identified above. These challenges can be understood as failures of egalitarian democracy, which prevent democracies from meeting the relevant adequacy

conditions. For example, populism might be understood as a threat to meeting the discriminating condition on political judgments in that populist narratives obscure heterogeneity and prevent citizens from considering additional perspectives. This in turn might violate the egalitarian feature of Christiano's view because those identified as irredeemably corrupted in populist narratives may not have equal resources with which to develop, and defend, their perspectives in the deliberative process.

While I am sympathetic with much of Christiano's account, I will present three differences between his view and the one I defend here, which support the epistemic civic virtue perspective over egalitarian deliberation. First, my defense of the importance of democratic health and of epistemic civic virtue is compatible with multiple possible views about the value(s) that justify democracy. I argue that regardless of where in the taxonomy or moral and political your favorite view lies, you should also take an interest in promoting democratic health and epistemic civic virtue to realize your preferred value(s). Christiano's view, however, is committed to the value of social equality, and so it only speaks to those convinced by those particular arguments for democracy, giving it a more limited scope.

Second, Christiano is committed to egalitarian deliberation as the process through which the cognitive conditions of citizenship are met. However, the four social epistemic challenges to democratic health provide reasons to worry about the effectiveness of such a strategy, as discussed in Section V above. This consideration is closely related to the third and final difference: Christiano's account does not sufficiently capture how citizens themselves contribute to diminished democratic health due to the interdependence between the social environment and individual habits. These two differences are closely related; part of the problem with deliberation under conditions of low democratic health is that citizens are ill equipped to realize epistemic

gains, given all of the challenges they face. These challenges manifest, in part, through how citizens react to and communicate with one another. For example, by interpreting relevant information from others with bias due to polarization or ethnocentrism, by failing to consider other perspectives with appeal to populist rhetoric, or by misinterpreting the claims of others in different social groups. These reactions further pollute the social epistemic environment by reinforcing fellow partisans and pushing them further to extremes, or further propagating populist narratives. For this reason, improving democratic health requires intervention at the institutional or social level *and also* directly with regard to individual epistemic practices, and the initial stages of progress on this front may not come from deliberation.

VII. Conclusion

The main goal of this paper is to argue that defenders of democracy should concern themselves with democratic health in order to strengthen the case for democracy and make sure that its value is realized to the greatest extent possible. I have argued that democratic theorists across the taxonomy of justifications of democracy have reason to take on this task because of a shared commitment that citizens be equipped to use the infrastructure of democracy to advance their interests. Furthermore, I have argued that democratic health requires that citizens develop key epistemic capacities to identify and communicate their interests, and that the extent to which these capacities are cultivated depends on background social epistemic conditions. I then drew upon empirical research to identify four key social epistemic challenges to democratic health, which theorists and practitioners must address to realize the value of democracy. Finally, I have argued that an epistemic conception of civic virtue provides the best framework through which to understand these challenges and to provide guidance on how to address them.

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Chapter 2: Responsiveness and Democratic Representation

Introduction

Political representatives, and the policies they propose and enact, are often evaluated on the basis of responsiveness to public opinion. One can find examples of this criterion at work in news articles that appeal to public opinion polls demonstrating that a majority of Americans support or oppose a policy under consideration, where that observed opinion is meant to bear on whether the policy should be adopted. Similarly, elected officials are often criticized or praised with appeal to indicators that the majority of their constituents agree or disagree with a decision they have made. Those who apply this criterion may not always use the term, "responsiveness", but in making these comparisons, they often implicitly rely on the claim that public opinion should guide representative decision-making, and therefore, that responsiveness is an appropriate criterion with which to evaluate representatives in a democracy.

In some cases, evaluating the responsiveness, in this sense, of democratic representatives might appear straightforward. For example, public opinion in the U.S. seems to exhibit a long-term trend in favor of legalizing betting on professional sports. A Gallup poll in 1993 found that 56% of Americans opposed legalization of sports betting and only 41% were in favor. Fourteen years later, a 2017 poll conducted by the Washington Post and UMass Lowell found that 55% now supported legalization of sports betting and only 33% were opposed, which demonstrates a clear shift in favor of legalization (Dyck & Talty 2017). So, one might judge the responsiveness of representatives with appeal to these observations; responsive legislators will tend to shift their

behavior in favor of legalization, or else be replaced by representatives who better align with this view, all else equal.

However, using responsiveness as a criterion with which to evaluate the performance of democratic representatives is not always so straightforward. Consider the volatility of observed public opinion of the Affordable Care Act. The relative approval and disapproval rates in opinion polling have varied over time with disapproval rates higher at some points and approval rates higher at others (often without an absolute majority) (Fingerhut 2017). Assessing the responsiveness of democratic representatives is more difficult under such circumstances: should representatives change their behavior with each change in polling? Should they try to anticipate what polling will look like at the time of the next election campaign? Should they try to determine a long-term trend or the underlying concerns that citizens have about health care? Should they focus on shifts in opinion that are attributable to new information, but not those due to deceptive framing or unjustified beliefs? In this paper, I will develop the notion of responsiveness to better address some of these complications of responding to observed public opinion.

In Section I, I discuss the empirical literature on responsiveness and provide a reconstruction of its underlying motivation, in terms of self-governance. In Section II, I argue that self-governance has two component values, sovereignty and non-alienation, and suggest that these two values are likely to come apart under current political circumstances. As a result, political representatives can face a tradeoff between advancing either of these two values when acting responsively with respect to their constituents. Given this tradeoff, aligning with observed public opinion may not always be the most responsive action for a representative to take. In Section III, I discuss the existing body of theoretical literature on representation and argue that

interest-responsiveness views are better equipped to address this tradeoff than constructivist views. In Section IV, I argue that responsiveness is best understood as a systemic quality of representative institutions. In addition, I argue that a systemic approach, perhaps counter-intuitively, can best provide action-guidance to individual representatives. Finally, in Section V, I demonstrate how my account of system interest-responsiveness can guide institutional design within representative democracies with a focus on pairing a representative division of labor with expanded forms of public input.

I. Responsiveness and Observed Public Opinion

A. Empirical Research on Responsiveness

Political commentators, journalists, and lay citizens are not the only ones who measure responsiveness by comparing observed public opinion to representative actions. The standard approach to measuring the responsiveness of public officials in empirical political science uses a similar framework. This approach, at its core, assesses the extent to which representative actions or policy outcomes, align with public opinion observed via surveys. So, a particular representative, such as a legislator, or a representative body, such as the U.S. Senate or Supreme Court, is taken to be responsive when their policy decisions align with observed public opinion.[35] What this alignment consists in can take a few different forms.

[35] Some empirical researchers also assess the responsiveness of political parties to their membership. For example, by assessing the extent of congruence of opinion between those who voted for a given party and the party elites in different policy domains (Dalton 1985) or assessing the congruence between voters' prioritization of different issues and the emphasis placed on those issues by party elites (Spoon & Klüver 2014; 2015). However, the role that parties play in representation can differ based on whether parties operate within a proportional or majoritarian voting system. For example, party discipline tends to have greater influence in proportional systems. Taking advantage of a unique set of circumstances in Switzerland where one house of parliament is elected under a proportional system and another is elected under a majoritarian system, Stadelmann, Portmanm and Eichenberger (2016) find that representatives in a majoritarian system tend to have higher levels of congruence with the majority opinion of their geographic constituents (201-202). While parties evidently play an important role in determining the responsiveness of representatives, I do not have space in this chapter to discuss them in any detail, given the complexity of the interaction between these different factors, though I hope to do so in future work.

One fairly simple form takes observed public opinion about a particular policy question, such as federal spending on space exploration, and compares it to changes in that particular policy, or a representative's action in that policy domain (Page and Shapiro 1983, 32). [36] The more that policy outcomes or decisions, such as more or less funding for space exploration or a vote for such an outcome, correspond to prior shifts in public opinion, the more responsive the relevant policymakers are taken to be. So, when representatives act in a responsive manner, on this view, a change in public opinion in a domain should lead to a corresponding change in representative activity, all else equal.

However, citizens do not always form preferences on every policy question and there may be no public opinion data for some policy questions. To address these complications, public opinion data on specific policy questions can be used to construct more general measures of public opinion with which to assess responsiveness. For example, Stimson, Mackuen, & Erikson (2002) measure responsiveness in terms of public mood, which is an indicator of how conservative or liberal public opinion is at a given time. This measure is calculated using the ratios of responses to questions from the General Social Survey as an input.[37] So, for example, the measure includes the ratio of responses to the question, "should we spend more, less, or about the same on improving the education system?" For this question, a "more" response is

[36] This basic approach can differ depending on the parties of the responsiveness relation that is being assessed. For example, the earliest research in this domain focused on "dyadic representation" by comparing actions, such as roll call votes, taken by particular U.S. congressional representatives to the observed opinion of their constituents for various issues (Miller & Stokes 1963). Later on, this alignment approach was extended to "collective representation" whereby public opinion extending beyond individual representatives' constituencies (e.g., state or national opinion data) is compared to the legislature as a whole (Weissberg 1978). This approach allows for a comparison between public opinion at the state and national level and policy outcomes decided by the legislature or the federal government. For example, by comparing actual U.S. federal defense expenditures to national level public opinion (Hartley & Russett 1992). See Manza & Cook (2002), Shapiro (2011), and Golder & Ferland (2018) for reviews of this literature. Researchers have conducted similar analyses of responsiveness for U.S. presidents (Druckman & Jacobs 2009), the U.S. Supreme Court (Flemming & Wood 1997; Giles, Blackstone, & Vining Jr. 2008; Epstein & Martin 2010), and U.S. state-level agencies (Yang & Pandey 2007).

[37] The General Social Survey is a long-running survey (starting in 1972), which collects American demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal information. It contains many questions about social and political policy, and so it provides a useful resource for measures of public mood. See this webpage for more information: http://gss.norc.org/About-The-GSS.

coded as liberal, while a "less" response is coded as conservative.[38] The measure of public mood is then constructed by aggregating the ratios of responses to an array of such policy questions (194-197). Stimson, Mackuen & Erikson compare this measure of public mood (at a given point of time) to policy actions by the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate, Presidency, and Supreme Court (e.g., one year following a given observation of public mood) in order to measure the aggregate responsiveness of these institutions (319).[39] This measure, despite the added layers of complexity, preserves the basic approach used in the media and public sphere of evaluating responsiveness in terms of the alignment between observed public opinion and representative actions or outcomes. Again, the motivation behind this measure is that responsive representation shifts along with public opinion in hopes of matching policy to public opinion.

Some empirical researchers distinguish "responsiveness" and "congruence" in order to highlight how shifts in policy that follow shifts in public opinion do *not* guarantee correspondence between public preferences and policy outcomes (Matsusaka 2010, 134; Lax & Phillips 2012, 148; Golder & Ferland 2018, 215). For one instance of this distinction, consider Lax & Phillips (2012), who define responsiveness as a positive correlation between opinion and policy, and define congruence as a match between policy and majority opinion (148). These two concepts can come apart when policymakers "over-respond" to shifts in public opinion.[40] For example, assume that in a particular state, the income tax is 3% when public opinion shifts in

[38] Stimson, Mackuen & Erikson (2002) characterize their coding of responses by ideology in terms of a more activist or more conservative government (320).
[39] They find that the House, Senate, and Presidency tend to respond more quickly to shifts in public mood, while the Supreme Court responds more slowly, though they do find that all of these institutions are responsive in this sense (Stimson, Mackuen & Erikson 2002, 319).
[40] In order to address these concerns, Matsusaka (2010) compares observed public opinion to policy outcomes (in particular U.S. States) in cases where one can interpret the policy choice as binary. For example, whether there is an estate tax or not, whether the death penalty is permitted or not, whether same-sex marriage is permitted or not, etc. (142). Matsusaka defines a congruent outcome as one where the majority opinion (which can be one of two binary options) in a given state matches the existing policy in that state. Using this approach, he finds that likelihood of congruence increases with the size of the majority on a given issue in a state (144). For an influential discussion of different ways of comparing public opinion to representative behavior that is sensitive to heterogeneity within a given constituency, see Achen (1978).

favor of lowering the income tax. In response, policymakers might "over-respond" by eliminating the income tax altogether (which does preserve a correlation between public opinion and policy), while majority opinion favors a 2% income tax. Lax & Phillips find evidence of "over-responsiveness" leading to incongruence in state level policy due to polarization, whereby U.S. states tend to implement largely conservative or largely liberal policies (157).

Even with these added complications, this perspective shares a commitment to an alignment between observed public opinion and the policy decisions of representatives with the previously discussed approach. We can understand cases of "over-responsiveness" as failures of responsiveness because under those conditions, representatives' responses to shifts in public opinion fail to properly align with public opinion (due to the lack of congruence). This preserves the perspective that responsiveness should be directed toward an alignment between observed public opinion and representative decisions, which ultimately determine policy (Golder & Ferland 2018, 214).

In general, empirical research on responsiveness finds that representatives in the U.S. are responsive to public opinion, at least under certain conditions. For example, U.S. political representatives tend to be more responsive to public opinion when the relevant policy issue is more salient, when there has been a large shift in opinion, the closer the decision is to an election, and when high income citizens have the relevant preference (among other factors).[41] One possible response to these findings is to conclude that the work of investigating responsiveness as such is over. The election of representatives and their oversight of other public officials seem to produce responsiveness. So, the best focus for further democratic improvement

[41] See Manza & Cook (2002, 651-655) and Shapiro (2011, 986-987) for helpful overviews of these factors. See Erikson (2015), Gilens (2005; 2012), Page, Bartels & Seawright (2013), and Rigby & Wright (2013) for more on differential responsiveness when citizens' policy preferences differ on the basis of income.

efforts might be to equalize citizens' capacity to influence policy choices, and perhaps to increase representatives' access to measures of public opinion.[42] Before posing some challenges to this perspective, which many theorists have challenged, I will now try to capture its underlying motivation.[43]

B. Responsiveness as a Facilitator of Self-Governance

One way to make sense of the alignment approach is by appealing to the notion of self-governance, as part of the value of democracy. A common understanding of democracy's value is that it enables popular sovereignty: that *the people* determine the policies by which they are governed, which is a form of collective self-governance.[44] Realizing self-governance through common democratic institutions is complicated, however, by the fact that democracy is usually not pursued in its direct form. Direct democracy is often undesirable due to feasibility constraints for populations of large people and the high decision-making costs it would impose. Instead, the people must rule through various intermediaries, such as elected officials, elected and unelected judges, and unelected bureaucrats.

For these reasons, political decision-making through democratic institutions will often differ substantially from paradigmatic cases of self-governance, where a self-governing person can make one's own decisions for oneself. Unlike someone who unilaterally forms their own plans and then decides to carry them out, citizens of a democracy cannot simply promulgate a set

[42] For example, Butler & Nickerson (2011) found that state legislators in New Mexico that were given district-specific survey results were more likely to align their votes with constituency opinion than those who did not receive such results. This suggests that increasing representatives' access to reports of public opinion in different domains would increase responsiveness-as-alignment.

[43] Much of the theoretical literature on representation has taken issue with the alignment approach used in much of the empirical research on responsiveness. However, as Rehfeld (2009) notes, common distinctions in this literature, such as the trustees/delegate distinction, can run together multiple axes of difference. As a result, I delay my discussion of this literature until Section III below in order to specify the particular set of normative considerations that I am concerned with in this paper.

[44] One early articulation of this view comes from Rousseau, who sees rule according to the will of the people as a way to preserve freedom in the context of a state with the power to promulgate and enforce laws (Rousseau 1761).

of plans for their political community all at once, and then carry them out themselves.[45] Instead, they have to rely on their power to influence a series of intermediaries that more directly influence the levels of policy. [46]

In the context of a representative framework, we need a different standard to determine whether representatives act on behalf of the represented, so that the latter still guide decision-making in accordance with the goal of self-governance. By responding to public opinion, the representative's actions might still be said to proceed from the citizens themselves, even though the citizens do not make each decision. The representative who fails to be responsive to citizens' views might then be accused of subverting self-governance, and imposing their will on the citizens who elected them. So, responsiveness can serve as a standard to be applied to representatives, in order to assess whether, in the move to representative democratic-decision-making, self-governance has been preserved. For these reasons, the alignment approach to assessing the responsiveness of representatives does have a plausible normative grounding, though I will address some normative tensions that it leads to in the next section.

II. Self-Governance and its Components

One problem with the alignment approach, which assesses responsiveness in terms of observed public opinion, is that public opinion can be an unreliable guide to the values, commitments, and goals that underlie citizens' political judgments. Consider, as an example, observed public opinion about voter fraud and eligible voters not being allowed to vote ahead of

[45] I remain neutral in this paper about who, exactly, should be picked out by the term citizen. I certainly do not mean to restrict this discussion to those who would receive legal citizenship rights in any particular country. One could imagine a state that automatically includes recent migrants in its political processes, or which includes those affected by policy decisions living elsewhere, and my discussion in this paper should also apply to such circumstances.

[46] Democratic theorists grapple with a similar complication posed by social choice theory. In light of impossibility results from social choice theory, Przeworski (2010) defends a fairly weak criterion of responsiveness for contemporary democracies: "[a]s long as government policies change in the same direction as the majority will expressed in elections, the axiom of responsiveness holds in the representative framework. All we need to assume is that if governments change, at least some policies tilt in the direction preferred by the people who elected them" (147). This criterion also seems to follow the alignment approach that I discuss in this section and which I challenge in Section II.

the November 2016 elections in the U.S. In an August Gallup poll of a nationally representative sample, 36% of respondents reported that votes being cast by people not eligible to vote would be a major problem in the upcoming November election, while 32% reported that eligible voters not being allowed to cast a vote would be a major problem. Furthermore, the same poll found very high support (80%) for voter photo identification requirements (McCarthy 2016). A plausible underlying motivation for such concerns is election security. If citizens do not feel confident in the electoral process because they worry about voter fraud or suppression, then the perceived legitimacy of the political decision-making that follows may decline. However, these indicators of relatively equal concern about fraud and suppression could be used to motivate measures that decrease political participation in circumstances where the threat of fraud is low, as seems to be the case with Voter ID laws (Minnite 2007; Levitt 2014). This responsiveness to observed public opinion could actually work against the underlying concern for election security, were those affected by voter suppression efforts to come to doubt the legitimacy of the electoral process.

A. Values, Commitments, and Goals as Relevant to Self-Governance

Even if public opinion does not always serve as a reliable guide to citizens' values, commitments, and goals, it might not be obvious why this is a problem from the perspective of *self-governance*. I now turn to the literatures in philosophy on practical rationality and hypothetical consent, which both discuss self-governance at the level of an individual agent, to explain this connection. Consider the following sets of circumstances to motivate one starting point of the literature on practical rationality.[47] Nick is addicted to narcotics and when presented with the opportunity to take the drug to which he is addicted, he is conflicted between a desire to

[47] Frankfurt (1971) uses this kind of case in his account of second-order volition (12). Frankfurt is concerned with an agent's ability to conform their will to their second-order volitions, but I extend the case here to explicitly include diachronic conflicts.

take it and a desire to refrain. He decides to take the drug, but also wishes he would instead act on his desire to refrain. In a similar set of circumstances, Naomi does not feel particularly conflicted in the moment in which she makes the decision because the negative consequences seem so far off compared to the short-term rewards of taking the drug. But, she comes to regret her decision, and plans to act differently, only to make the same decision again in the future. In both sets of circumstances, the addicted person acts on a desire, but they also fail to properly adjudicate between the different desires they have, either synchronically or diachronically. One way to capture what goes wrong in these cases is to say that the relevant person fails to act according to their values, commitments, and goals (VCG from now on).

I use these three terms to capture the range of different considerations that are discussed in the literature following Frankfurt's (1971) discussion of this sort of case. Values are relevant because the addicts in the examples above might endorse a value system such that that sober experiences are better than non-sober ones.[48] Bratman (2003) argues that in some cases, an agent's values will underdetermine how they should adjudicate between their desires. For example, an agent may genuinely see the value in consuming alcohol as well as in refraining from it. Faced with this dilemma, the agent can form a commitment to refrain from alcohol, which in turn can adjudicate between those desires in the face of this underdetermination (228; 240-241). Finally, agents can have certain goals that, while not necessarily bearing on the decision at hand, can be indirectly affected by it. For example, if Naomi's decision to take a drug ends up hindering other life pursuits that she wishes to prioritize, such as an upcoming athletic event for which she needs to stay healthy.

[48] Watson (1975) raises the concern that Frankfurt's (1971) view results in infinite regresses of higher order volitions, so he offers the possibility that the evaluation systems of agents are what should adjudicate conflicts between desires (220).

Those working in the dynamic choice literature have explicitly linked these sorts of challenges to self-governance. As the discussion above suggests, agents can engage in self-defeating behavior in favor of short term-gains, which stifles their pursuit of long-term goals, and which they come to regret. As a result, some argue that being a self-governing agent involves forming intentions or plans, which can regulate our behavior and adjudicate cases of conflicting desires. For example, Chrisola Andreou (2012), in a discussion of self-defeating behavior, argues that a necessary condition of self-governance is to be governed by one's commitments and values (21). In general, Andreou holds, self-governing behavior is not self-defeating because it is governed by values and commitments with which one identifies, where this identification can reflect a broader diachronic perspective (21; 23).[49]

Michael Bratman (2000) also discusses the importance of self-governance in order to avoid self-defeating behavior. Bratman argues that two capacities are crucial for diachronic agency: *reflectiveness*, which is the ability to form second order desires by stepping back and assessing our motivations and first order desires, and *planfulness*, which is the ability to exert agency over time in an organized way (42). Bratman sees these capacities as contributing to our "self-governing policies", which function as our most general intentions and plans. We can then use self-governing policies to adjudicate conflicts between lower-level desires, intentions, and plans (48-51).

For both Andreou and Bratman, an agent acting on their desire(s) may not advance self-governance. Self-governance requires aligning one's behavior at one time with one's more general set of values, commitments, and goals (VCG), and this can sometimes require deviating

[49] Ultimately, Andreou (2012) holds that some cases of self-defeat are compatible with self-governance, but only when someone has undergone a sufficiently radical transformation such that it makes sense to consider it a case of one self defeating another (30). We can acknowledge this possibility, while maintaining that in most cases, it seems that self-defeat leaves one vulnerable to charges of failures of self-governance and diachronic rationality.

from one's strongest inclinations at any given moment. This insight reveals one sense in which aligning observed public opinion and representative action or policy may not promote the self-governance of a democratic polity. Much like in the case of an individual agent, observed public opinion at a particular time may not align with citizens' values, commitments, and goals. For example, as in the example above, citizens' judgments about photo identification requirements might stand in tension with the underlying goal of maintaining trust in electoral processes. Under these circumstances, being responsive to public opinion can make it so that citizens are *not* governed in accordance with their VCG.[50] As a result, collective self-governance may not be advanced by responsiveness to public opinion after all.

One might think, however, that alignment with one's VCG does not exhaust the notion of self-governance, especially in the political domain. Citizens could reasonably object if their representatives were to completely disregard their actually held judgments in favor of responding to their higher-order VCG. So, simply abandoning any notion of responsiveness-as-alignment with respect to public opinion seems too quick.

B. Non-Alienation and Sovereignty as Components of Self-Governance

In order to develop a diagnosis for this tension, I now turn to a distinction from the literature on hypothetical consent and autonomy. David Enoch (2017), in an explanation of when hypothetical consent can serve a substitute for actual consent, argues that autonomy can be important in two different senses: non-alienation and sovereignty (32). Non-alienation refers to the ability to govern one's life according to one's deep commitments, and thereby aligns with the considerations raised in the dynamic choice literature (Enoch 2017, 29). For example, when deciding whether to give the patient a transfusion, we need to consider the patients' deeply held

[50] I have not yet established how one might investigate what citizens' VCG are, so I have simply assumed the relevant VCG for the sake of this example. I discuss how to gather evidence about citizens' VCG in Sections III and V.

commitments. It would be alienating (and thereby violate non-alienation) to carry out the transfusion for a patient with a deeply held set of religious commitments that would prohibit such a procedure, but it would not be alienating to carry out the transfusion if the patient is simply anxious around needles, and wishes that they could eliminate that anxiety (23-26).

Sovereignty, by contrast, refers to the ability to have the final say over a decision (34). Enoch motivates the value of sovereignty with appeal to a fairly mundane case: asking someone to pass the salt during a meal, even though eating a meal with salt might stand in tension with the goal of improving my health. In this case, eating more salt might alienate me from my goal, but it is also important that I be the one to make the decision. What goes in my body seems to be part of my domain of sovereignty in the sense that I should have the final say about what I consume (or at least some considerable weight in the decision), even if the decision ends up being alienating (31-32).

This same distinction can help to make sense of what goes wrong in some cases of responsiveness with respect to the value of self-governance. Aligning representative action with observed public opinion in contexts where public opinion is not a reliable guide to citizens' VCG can end up prioritizing sovereignty at the expense of non-alienation. More generally, this suggests that there can be a tradeoff between these two components of self-governance, so political representatives must choose whether to be responsive with regard to observed public opinion *or* citizens' values, commitments, and goals (or at least assign weights to each component).

This tradeoff is surprising because these two components usually coincide in paradigmatic cases of self-governance. When an individual is self-governing, she can choose and act according to her own judgment, which satisfies sovereignty, and we often expect that these

choices will help her to advance her VCG. If citizens' political judgments and behaviors were to always align with their VCG, then responsiveness to observed public opinion would be the best way to realize self-governance in a representative system. However, once observed public opinion and citizens' VCG come apart, then there are two different objects that representatives can aim to be responsive towards, both of which relate to self-governance.[51]

C. Why Sovereignty and Non-Alienation Might Come Apart

There is also good reason to think that tradeoffs between non-alienation and sovereignty will be fairly common in the political domain.[52] One reason is that citizens' political judgments can be uninformed or misinformed. If citizens lack sufficient information or fail to properly apply accessible information when forming their political judgments, then public opinion may not align with citizens' VCG. Some researchers studying political information suggest that citizens tend to be uninformed with respect to a wide variety of political issues (Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996; Somin 2013). To the extent that this is the case, responsiveness to observed public opinion may actually contribute to alienation, rather than work against it. Consider the commonly cited finding that Americans tend to overestimate the share of the federal budget that is spent on foreign aid. The correct is answer is 1% or less, which only 3% of respondents answered correctly in a recent survey, while the average answer was a gross overestimate of 31% (DiJulio, Norton, & Brodie 2016). It is possible that judgments about how much of the federal budget should be devoted to foreign aid are driven by citizens' conceptions of a fair outcome,

[51] I am not considering the further complications that arise due to different sizes of majorities in public opinion or of differential responsiveness to different subsets of citizens (though these are important issues for me to address in future work that builds on the argument here). My point about the tradeoff between non-alienation and sovereignty should apply even if observed public opinion were unanimous.

[52] Druckman (2014) raises a similar set of considerations, though he frames his discussion around a concern about the endogeneity of citizens' preferences because of concerns over elite influence. I maintain that even if citizens' preferences were properly exogenous, responsive representatives would still face a tradeoff between non-alienation and sovereignty in the presence of these phenomena.

whereby the U.S. should contribute to foreign aid, but not give up so much so as to be taken advantage of, given a scarcity of resources. However, due to these misguided beliefs about the current state of affairs, public opinion about how foreign aid spending should change could actually lead policymakers away from the realization of that outcome. Representatives in these circumstances are then faced with a trade-off: they can either be responsive to these judgments at the expense of non-alienation or be responsive to citizens' VCG by assigning less weight to observed public opinion.

Some empirical research has found evidence that an increased awareness of policy-relevant facts can affect political judgments. For example, Gilens (2001) tests the effects of policy-relevant information, such as the proportion of the federal budget devoted to foreign aid and long-term declines in the crime rate, on support for corresponding policy changes (cutting foreign aid spending or increased spending for prison construction). Gilens finds that that the provision of this information is associated with a decline in support for cutting foreign aid spending and increased spending for prison construction, respectively (386). He also analyses survey data measuring knowledge of this information and corresponding political judgments, and finds a similar relationship (384).[53]

Citizens can also be *misinformed* such that they confidently believe falsehoods that affect their political judgments. Kuklisnki et al. (2000) find evidence that respondents' false beliefs about the average welfare payment, proportion of the federal budget devoted to welfare, and

[53] Nonexperimental analyses of this kind often use data about how policy preferences differ with respect to how informed citizens are, controlling for other factors, and use this analysis to estimate what citizens' preferences would look like, were they better informed, via statistical imputation (Bartels 1996). However, Pierce (2015) criticizes this approach and suggests that effects attributed to differences in information might actually reflect differences in fundamental values, such as egalitarianism versus authoritarianism. Lau & Redlawsk (1997) also appeal to experimental data that compares citizen attitudes in better or worse informational environments to suggest that even less informed voters still vote as they would with better information with a relatively high frequency (70%). I do not have space to engage in these debates here, but even if one is fairly optimistic about citizen information levels and competence, I submit that the tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation is still worth considering for two reasons. First, the extent to which observed public opinion is driven by informed judgments will vary from issue to issue. Second, even well-informed voters are susceptible to the other factors I discuss in this section.

racial demographics of welfare recipients determine their views about welfare spending. Kinder & Kam (2010) appeal to a related explanation of their findings that ethnocentrism among white Americans is associated with support for cuts to means tested welfare programs (such as SNAP and TANF), but support for spending on social insurance programs (such as Social Security and Medicare) (185-188). Their proposed explanation for this effect appeals to racialized associations between different social programs: social insurance programs are often framed as earned through work and investment, which might suggest to white ethnocentric citizens that they are for white people, as opposed to means tested welfare programs and human capital programs such as Head Start, which are associated with racial minorities (188-191). As in the case of uninformed judgments, judgments based on false beliefs or misleading associations also run the risk of misaligning with citizens' VCG.

In addition to considerations about how informed citizens' judgments are, some features of human decision-making processes also suggest a tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation. Scholars of human decision-making have catalogued the various ways that we make use of heuristics to economize on our cognitive resources (e.g., Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky 1982). However, in the process, decision-makers can fall prey to biases and their use of heuristics can lead them astray. For example, the framing of a particular issue or question can impact citizens' responses. Schaffner & Atkinson (2009) investigate the effects of exposure to a "death" tax frame, in addition to describing the same policy as an "estate" tax. They find that exposure to the "death" tax frame impacted respondents' beliefs about how many families have to pay the estate tax, as well as their support for repealing it when they saw Republicans as a credible source of information on tax issues.[54] It is worth noting, though, that the robustness of

[54] But not if they thought *only* Democrats were a credible source on tax issues (Schaffner & Atkinson 2009, 130-131).

such framing effects seems to vary with context because they can be attenuated by counter-framing and discussion in a heterogeneous group (Druckman 2004, 675; 680).

For an example of how heuristics and biases can lead citizens astray outside of a laboratory context, consider the following example from Wells et al. (2009). In 2003, the voters in Washington (state) voted on a citizen-initiated ballot initiative designed to repeal workplace ergonomics regulations. Both pro and con camps emerged with Republicans and the Chamber of Commerce supporting the initiative, while Democrats and the Washington State Labor Council opposed (960). Wells et al. conducted a survey to collect information on citizens' value orientations with respect to regulation, their knowledge of endorsements with respect to the ballot initiative, and their empirical beliefs about the relevant workplace regulations. They found that among citizens with knowledge of endorsement cues, citizens' value orientation toward regulation (being pro or anti) was associated with empirically distorted beliefs (overestimating the number of workplace injuries or overestimating the cost of the regulation) (963-964). In other words, citizens who had access to a relevant heuristic: knowledge of an endorsement for or against the ballot initiative, were then led astray by forming distorted empirical beliefs guided by their value orientation. While the ballot initiative ultimately passed, this evidence of motivated reasoning raises doubts about the degree to which citizens' judgments were reliably formed and indicates the potential for a tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation.

Another way in which citizens' political judgments can serve as unreliable guides to their VCG results from how human decision-makers tend to react differently to the same information depending on whether it is framed as a loss or gain. In particular, we tend to be more willing to assume risk to avoid outcomes framed as losses (Kahneman & Tversky 1979; 1992). One experimental example in the political domain involves comparing attitudes to hypothetical

policies based on their projected rate of inflation, which can be framed as a gain or loss depending on the inflation rate respondents were given as a reference point. As we might expect, respondents are willing to support policies with more risk to avoid the same inflation rate when framed as a loss (higher than the reference point), as compared to when it is framed as a gain (lower than the reference point) (Quattrone & Tversky 1988, 723). Relatedly, Arceneaux (2012) finds evidence that arguments framed in terms of losses (e.g., a loss of family values or a loss of free speech) tend to be more persuasive than equivalent arguments framed in terms of gains by inducing feelings of anxiety in the face of the potential loss. When these tendencies determine political decision-making in this manner, citizens' political judgments can become arbitrary, and potentially misaligned with their values, commitments, and goals (Lau & Redlawsk 2001; McDermott 2001).

This asymmetry in the persuasive force of loss frames versus gain frames might explain part of the reason that populist rhetoric can be a useful, but potentially worrisome, tool. Populist rhetorical strategies rely on the juxtaposition of a homogenous conception of the "people" with a corrupted set of elites who fail to serve them (Kazin 1995; Müller 2016). In setting up this juxtaposition, populists can deploy loss frames to describe the situation of the "people", such as with appeals to losses of certain kinds of jobs, past prosperity, or forms of identity.[55] These loss frames are useful for inducing feelings of anxiety and capturing citizens' sense that elites have failed them. But such rhetoric is not well-suited to conveying information about heterogeneity of political goals or values among citizens because of the homogenous portrayal of "the people"

[55] Consider the following quote from then presidential candidate Trump from a rally in Phoenix in 2015: "They're taking our jobs. They're taking our manufacturing jobs. They're taking our money. They're killing us" (Schreckinger 2015).

and their interests, nor is it well-suited to reasoning about the tradeoffs between different policy choices.

Finally, as I suggested in the discussion of dynamic choice above, dynamic inconsistencies of preferences can also lead to tradeoffs between non-alienation and sovereignty. This can occur due to phenomena like the discounting of future payoffs, which can lead citizens' preferences to vary over time in ways that conflict (Ainslie 2001; Bratman 1998; Gauthier 1997). For example, citizens might neglect a long-term interest in devoting tax revenue to infrastructure maintenance because of an aversion to the short-term cost of tolls or tax increases. However, that preference may undermine long-term goals to which they are committed, such as continued economic growth in their region, or the speed of their own commute to work ten years in the future. Due to the rate at which they discount those future benefits, citizens may favor the short-term gains of not having to pay tolls or taxes at the particular moment in time when the policy decision is made, but they may come to regret this decision for the rest of the period that follows.[56] One can imagine a similar scenario for other policy decisions with short-term costs for important long-term gains, such as combatting climate change. Citizens' judgments in such a case might stand in tension with the responsibility they feel to their children and grandchildren (following from their values and commitments), and would certainly disrupt goals in other domains, from preserving a family vacation location to having an adequate water supply.

We should also pay attention to the ways in which these different phenomena can interact with one another. For example, failed heuristics and biases might also lead citizens to become misinformed over time. One reason is a tendency toward availability bias, which refers to a

[56] As far as I can tell, there is no empirical research applying a dynamic choice framework to political decision-making. However, insofar as we take the dynamic choice literature to track features of human decision-making in general, the issues that arise should also apply to political decision-making contexts.

reasoner's tendency to treat the strength or immediacy of an association between two phenomena as an indication of the frequency of the event (McDermott 2001, 12-13). It is possible that such a tendency could underlie Kuklinski et al.'s (2000) finding, discussed above, that citizens were misinformed about the welfare system in the U.S. This might be the case if, for example, media coverage led to an association between welfare, large expenditures, and racial minority communities.

The more that these three features of human decision-making characterize citizens' political judgments, the more likely it is that responsiveness to observed public opinion, which can advance sovereignty, will stand in tension with realizing the non-alienation component of self-governance. As a result, the notion of responsiveness that we find in popular discourse and in empirical research in political science does not, after all, track the value of self-governance in all contexts. In order for political representatives to track self-governance in its totality, they have to be responsive *both* to observed public opinion *and* citizens' VCG, especially when they are likely to come apart due to the aforementioned features of human decision-making. To be responsive to the latter under these non-ideal conditions, representatives must *idealize* away from public opinion as it is observed via surveys.

In the long run, of course, it is also worth trying to decrease the extent to which sovereignty and non-alienation stand in tension. As citizens become better informed and become better at correcting for these limitations of decision-making, the potential tradeoff between non-alienation and sovereignty will decrease. So, if improvements are made with regard to the epistemic environment in which citizens operate and the habits and dispositions of citizens, then the problem of idealizing away from observed public opinion becomes less pressing.[57] However,

[57] I address these prospects in the other two chapters of this dissertation.

given the amount of time and level of expertise required for decisions faced by public officials, this challenge is unlikely to ever be completely eliminated.

III. Interest-responsiveness and Theories of Representation

The existing body of political theories of representation provides some resources with which to address the challenge to responsive representation posed by the tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation. The standard starting point for many debates in this domain is the distinction between trustees and delegates. The trustee view of representation holds that representatives should exercise their own judgment to promote the common good, while the delegate view holds that representatives should make decisions as their constituents would (Urbinati & Warren 2008, 400). However, as Rehfeld (2009) notes, this distinction involves at least three axes of difference, which are separable. These three dimensions are: (1) should a representative pursue the good of the whole or a part? (2) Should he or she rely on his or her own judgment, or that of a third party? (3) Should he or she be more responsive or less responsive to sanctions for his or her work? (221).[58] Consider how the first and second dimensions might come apart: a representative might aim to decide as their constituents would, were they tasked with pursuing the good of the entire polity, or, as their constituents would decide, were they tasked with pursuing the good of their particular constituency. Both approaches involve deferring to the judgments of others, which is taken to be a distinctive feature of the delegate model. However, a concern for the common good is associated with trustees, while a concern for the good of constituents is associated with delegates.

The fact that these dimensions can come apart in this way provides some reason to abandon the trustee/delegate distinction in favor of more fine-grained distinctions between

[58] Jane Mansbridge also expresses misgivings with the trustee/delegate distinction. See Mansbridge (2011) for another helpful, alternative taxonomy of approaches to representation.

approaches to representation. However, none of Rehfeld's proposed axes of difference fully capture the tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation. The second axis of difference comes closest: by relying on the judgment of their constituents, representative do seem to choose sovereignty at the expense of non-alienation. Such representatives would seek to be maximally responsive to observed public opinion, despite the factors that might lead it to serve as an unreliable guide to citizens' VCG. However, it is not clear that trustees necessarily pursue non-alienation at the expense of sovereignty. Instead, by exercising their own judgment (about the common good), it seems that trustees are free not to be responsive to their constituents at all. Trustees' judgments might depart both from observed public opinion and from citizen's VCG, perhaps because they choose to advance a conception of the (public) good that is completely divorced from public opinion and citizen's VCG.[59] For this reason, I submit that a better way to capture this particular tradeoff is in terms of different object of responsiveness.

Representatives who follow the alignment approach take observed public opinion as the object of their responsiveness. For this reason, following this view leads to the assessment of representatives according to whether their activity aligns with public opinion over time. By contrast, a concern with non-alienation tells toward VCG as the object of responsiveness. One further problem is that it can be challenging to determine what citizens' VCG are, especially under the non-ideal reasoning conditions that I described above. However, there are some possible indicators to which representatives could turn, such as polling data about citizens' rationales for their policy preferences, polling data about citizens' priorities in particular policy domains, and policy preferences recorded after citizens have been furnished with relevant information or engaged in moderated discussion with others. We might think of different forms

[59] Pitkin (1967) raises a similar point and describes this possibility for trustees as "an expert deciding technical questions and taking care of the ignorant masses as a parent takes care of a child" (210).

of public input, beyond basic opinion polls, as further forms of evidence on the basis of which to idealize public opinion. That is, they give us some evidence about what citizens' views might be, were they better informed or were they able to take more time to consider particular policy issues under better conditions. There may not be any one measure that directly indicates citizens' VCG and how policies might advance them, but representatives could use expanded forms of public input as a means of aiming at citizens' VCG as another object of their responsiveness, in addition to observed public opinion.

This distinction between different objects of responsiveness does admit of degrees. We can conceive of the different possible approaches to representation related to this axis of difference in terms of different degrees of idealization away from public opinion that representatives can engage in, based on indicators of citizens' VCG. Representatives can be responsive to observed public opinion, which involves no idealization, following the alignment approach. At a moderate level of idealization, representatives might consider what citizens' political judgments might look like given "the rationality and information necessary for real moral agents to navigate their social world given normal environmental constraints" (Gaus 2010, 99). At a more radical level, representatives might consider what citizens' political judgments would look like with "full information" (Mansbridge 1983, 24).[60]

Despite a shift to thinking in terms of idealization, I am in the familiar position of developing an account of how representatives should position themselves with respect to a key

[60] This talk of idealization hearkens back to Enoch's (2017) initial target for his introduction of this distinction: hypothetical consent accounts of legitimacy. Hypothetical consent theorists seek to ground the legitimacy of the state in the consent that citizens would offer under idealized conditions. Judgments about what citizens would consent to, even under ideal conditions, depend on facts and assumptions about citizens as they are. For example, the reasons that a patient might have for withholding consent for a blood transfusion are relevant to making a determination about what they would consent to under different conditions (Enoch 2017, 23). A patient's religious reasons for withholding consent might be far more robust than a patient's anxiety around needles. The former set of reasons, therefore, would determine citizen consent under a greater range of idealizations than the latter.

axis of difference, just as many theorists have tried to do with respect to the delegate and trustee distinction. There are two primary candidates for a third position between delegates and trustees, which might also help address the problem of idealization and responsiveness. These two candidates are *constructivist views*, which abandon responsiveness in favor of alternative evaluative standards, and *interest-responsiveness views,* which preserve responsiveness as a criterion while allowing representatives to depart from observed public opinion. I will discuss each in turn.

A. Constructivist Views

Constructivist views reject responsiveness as an appropriate criterion of representation because representation is more creative and open-ended than accounts of responsiveness suggest. Instead of responding to constituent opinion as something prior to representation, constructivists understand representation as a process of making, and responding to, claims on behalf of others in a way that shapes one's constituency. For example, representatives can form new demands or articulate new identities on behalf of constituents, who later take them up (Disch 2011, 107). As a result, constructivists see their view as forward-looking, in that the evaluation of representation depends on the dynamics that follow representative claims, as opposed to a backward-looking evaluation of responsiveness.

Michael Saward articulates one prominent constructivist view, which analyzes representation in terms of representative claims using the following five-part schema: "A *maker* of representations ('M') puts forward a *subject* ('S') which stands for an *object* ('O') that is related to a *referent* ('R') and is offered to an *audience* ('A')" (2010, 36). Consider the following example: the US Republican Party (the maker of the claim) could portray itself (the subject) as standing for the interests (the object) of families (the referent) to the electorate (the audience)

(59).[61] Saward's analysis captures the active role of the maker of a representative claim, such as the Republican Party, in shaping the audience's understanding of the object and referent (the interests of families). Saward motivates this view with an appeal to the necessity of an interpretive frame:

> There is no self-presenting subject whose essential character and desires and interests are transparent, beyond representation, evident enough to be "read off" their appearance or their behavior. Politicians often *claim* to be able to read off constituency and national interests, to have a unique insight into voters real wants and needs. But the fact is that they can only do so after first deploying an interpretive frame containing selective representations of their constituents (77-78).

In this case, the Republican Party deploys a particular interpretive frame of families, perhaps as those who share traditional values and need to be protected from state interference, in their claim on their behalf. This frame is one of many representational resources that they can deploy to influence the way in which the electorate understands the Republican Party, the interests of families, and their relationship. The relevant interpretive frame deployed by representative claim makers can even shift for different audiences in a process he calls "shape-shifting." Saward gives the example of Nelson Mandela, who represented himself as an ally to the Communist Party and to South Africa's capitalists at different times, all with the aim of combatting white minority rule (2014, 735). In addition to capturing the aesthetic and symbolic components of representation, this framework draws attention to the contingent, active interpretation involved in representation.

The lack of unmediated access to the object and referent of representative claims, and the context dependency of their interpretation, leads Saward to skepticism about the role of theorists in assessing democratic representation. He states: "it is not the role of political theorists to *make*

[61] Saward (2010) does not explicitly identify a referent in his discussion of this example, but I have included one here in order to capture all five components of his schema. Elsewhere, he discusses people and groups that exist prior to evocation in politics as examples of referents, so I take this to be an uncontroversial interpretation of this example (51).

first-order judgments about democratic legitimacy of representative claims using some set of substantive or even presumptively universal criteria" (146). Instead, he argues that theorists should be limited to a second-order role of interpreting the actual judgments of constituencies (146). He characterizes the relevant criterion in terms of provisional acceptance:

> The essence of the approach to the question of democratic legitimacy which I defend is this: provisionally acceptable claims to democratic legitimacy across society are those for which there is evidence of sufficient acceptance of claims by appropriate constituencies under reasonable conditions of judgment (144-145).

In general, though, Saward suggests that it can be quite difficult to make these judgments. One reason is that acceptance can manifest in different ways in different contexts. He notes that assessing democratic legitimacy "is not a straightforward matter. Sometimes acceptance, verbal or otherwise, is overtly signaled. At other times, depending on context, acceptance may be taken as tacit – silence, for example, can mean consent in particular circumstances" (152). In addition, overt objections can be costly in some contexts, and some constituencies inhabit societies with limited opportunities to communicate freely (153-156).[62] The democratic legitimacy of representative claims is often unclear and for this reason, Saward limits normative judgments of legitimacy to *provisional* acceptance.

Lisa Disch (2011) defends another prominent constructivist view, and shares Saward's concerns about representative's relationship to citizens' preferences. Disch argues that "legislators do not simply respond to constituent preferences, but rather are active… in searching out and creating them" (100). In support of this claim, she notes that citizens' policy preferences are often endogenous. For example, they can be affected by elite rhetoric, though she argues that

[62] Lisa Disch (2015), who I also discuss below, argues that Saward's goal of leaving audiences as the ultimate judges of representative claims stands in tension with his account of democratic legitimacy. She worries that by licensing the theorist to make these sorts of judgments, Saward compromises the citizen standpoint by allowing that citizens' judgments can become suspect in environments that are less open (496).

this does not render such preferences illegitimate. In addition, Disch's claims that citizens' preferences do not exist "unmediated by social processes", which is similar to Saward's view that representatives provide interpretive frames through which to read citizens' preferences (104).

On this basis, Disch argues that there is no bedrock set of preferences to which representatives can respond, which renders responsiveness an inappropriate criterion (101-103; 109). Instead, she argues that representation should be evaluated with the criterion of reflexivity, which is a function of how well objections can be *mobilized*. She describes reflexivity as follows: "[i]t is, instead, the measure according to which a representation process can be judged as more or less democratic insofar as it does more or less to mobilize both express and implicit objections from the represented." (111). To satisfy this criterion, representatives need the infrastructure to incorporate objections into their future claims:

> Official and unofficial representatives must have regular, structured ways of taking objections into account. In the case of official representatives (e.g., government or party), reflexivity would require provision for a formal response that at least registers (if not necessarily incorporates) popular challenge (111).

As a result, Disch goes beyond Saward's recommendation that theorists turn their attention toward judgments of provisional acceptance, and distinguishes representatives based on the infrastructure they have in place to take up responses to their claims.

Despite some of the differences in the details of their accounts, Disch and Saward agree on a few commitments, which form the core of the constructivist point of view. They both argue that the contingency and endogeneity of citizens' preferences pose a challenge to responsiveness as an appropriate criterion of representation. Furthermore, they both argue that the appropriate normative criteria for representation depend on the future dynamics of observed public opinion.

Constructivists are right to point out the difficulties of assessing responsiveness given the iterated nature of the interactions between citizens and representatives, and to suggest that dynamic evaluation is important. However, these accounts go too far in abandoning responsiveness, given its utility in both descriptive and normative analysis.

There are two important considerations to note in favor of preserving responsiveness for descriptive analysis. First, even the received responsiveness-as-alignment perspective takes into account some of the dynamic considerations that constructivists emphasize. For example, Stimson, Mackuen & Erikson's (2002), in their research on responsiveness using public mood measures, advocate a dynamic model of responsiveness. They see responsiveness in the U.S. as an ongoing process of representatives and constituents reacting to one another (320). Acknowledging these broader complications does not prohibit them from analyzing the effect that shifts in citizens' policy preferences have on representative behavior, and responsiveness is a useful concept with which to capture these effects.

Constructivists might acknowledge the potential for dynamic accounts of responsiveness, but maintain their perspective can acknowledge a greater variety of cases, especially those where public opinion is not well-formed or easily captured in terms of a general ideological mood. However, there are meaningful applications for the concept of responsiveness even in these circumstances that seem especially favorable to the constructivist's affinity for forward-looking evaluation. Consider Jane Mansbridge's (1999) case study of Carol Mosely-Braun's role in rejecting a design patent for the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC).[63] Mosely-Braun was the only black member of the U.S. Senate at the time and she intervened to prevent an amendment to patent a design featuring the Confederate flag, a proposal that was deeply

[63] Mansbridge draws from Williams (1998) in her discussion of this case study.

offensive to many black Americans. Even though this particular issue had not been raised in previous political campaigns and would have likely passed unnoticed as part of a larger bill, Mosely-Braun was driven to act against it and represented many of her black constituents' interests in so doing. Mansbridge argues that Mosely-Braun was better positioned to take this action than progressive white senators because of her ties to black communities in her home state of Illinois (646-647).

This example, at first glance, is favorable to the constructivist view because this particular issue had not been previously salient, and so most citizens had not formed or expressed explicit attitudes about it. However, this example also illustrates one way in which representatives can utilize idealization that is based on prior knowledge about the VCG of their constituents, and so fits well under the umbrella of responsiveness.[64] Through her ties to black communities in Illinois, Mosely-Braun had ample evidence about the existing views and VCG of those constituents to know that, were they to be made aware of this proposal, they would reject it. A representative who acted without this evidentiary basis would not have been as well-positioned to determine how to advance these interests, and so may have been less responsive.

Insofar as Mosely-Braun acted on this evidentiary basis, we can evaluate Mosely-Braun in terms of responsiveness, even if her decision had never received public attention such that her constituents expressed their approval. Constructivist accounts, by focusing on the dynamics that follow claim-making, obscure the fact that we can evaluate the extent to which representatives base their claims on an understanding of the views and VCG of those they represent, independently of the response they receive. While there is an element of creativity in

[64] One might worry that this really is not a case of idealization, but rather an empirical prediction, given that it does not involve much of a departure from Mosely-Braun's constituents existing views. However, Mosely-Braun's knowledge of her constituents' views, and the values and commitments that underlie them, is what explains the success of her prediction. Insofar as those are the objects of responsiveness that underlie the idealizations that representatives are called to make, then we might think of this as an especially moderate instance of idealization, which nonetheless falls along the continuum of idealization.

representation, which is part of the inferences required for idealization, this does not render responsiveness inapplicable. There is still an important sense in which representatives can be responsive to their constituents even when public opinion is not fully formed or expressed, before or after the decision under consideration.

In addition to these descriptive considerations in favor of preserving a responsiveness framework, there are also normative reasons to do so. Recall that, given the challenges discussed in Section II above, representatives face a tradeoff between realizing non-alienation and sovereignty. Insofar as constructivist accounts limit the normative evaluation of representative action to anticipated or observed objections and acceptances, they cannot license the idealizations necessary to respond to this tradeoff. Representatives concerned exclusively with observed or anticipated objections that are determined by misinformation or failed heuristics will end up neglecting non-alienation, by promoting policies that stand in tension with citizens' VCG. This is because those non-ideal conditions might continue even after the relevant representative claim has been made. While a concern for responsiveness does not forestall the need to engage in iterated communication with one's constituents, which constructivists rightly call attention to, it also points to the need for seeking out other forms of public input and gathering evidence about citizens' VCG, in addition to considering objections based on observed public opinion. For these reasons, constructivist accounts do not provide the right set of resources with which to fully respond to the sovereignty/non-alienation tradeoff.

B. Interest-responsiveness Views

With these shortcomings of the constructivist approach for addressing the sovereignty/non-alienation tradeoff in mind, I now turn to a more promising alternative: interest-responsiveness accounts. Interest-responsiveness accounts of representation do, as you might

expect, retain a notion of responsiveness. However, unlike delegate views, these theorists argue that it can be permissible for representatives to depart from their constituents' views in some instances. In particular, they argue that representatives should be responsive to citizens' interests, understood objectively in some sense, rather than their preferences or actually held views. This shift to speaking in terms of interests can capture the role of idealization for the realization of non-alienation, insofar as citizens' VCG are taken to be part of their interests. However, interest-responsiveness theorists also emphasize the need for mechanisms for citizens to express their views and contest representative decisions, which also provide the means to promote sovereignty.

One example of an interest-responsiveness view comes from Hanna Pitkin (1967), who proposes this approach as a response to the delegate/trustee dichotomy discussed above. She argues that acting against the stated wishes of the represented requires an explanation of the justification for doing so (164). Pitkin outlines the scope of this condition as follows: "[t]here need not be a constant activity of responding, but there must be a constant rendition of responsive*ness*, of potential readiness to respond" (233). Pitkin states that representative government should respond to the wishes of their constituents "unless there are good reasons to the contrary", where such reasons refer to constituents' interests (232-233).

Philip Pettit (2000) defends a related view of representation within democracies, which can also be grouped under the interest-responsiveness banner. Pettit argues that democracies should be responsive to "common interests" (107). A good represents a common interest for Pettit insofar as "cooperatively avowable considerations support its collective provision" (108). Cooperatively avowable considerations are "such that were the population holding discussions about what it ought to cooperate in collectively providing, then they could not be dismissed as

irrelevant" (108). Pettit gives redistributive measures as a potential example of a common interest in his sense, which could be justified because everyone has interests in being protected against certain difficulties, such as legal or medical hardships (110). Insofar as the actual views of citizens do not always support redistributive measures, Pettit's criterion for common interests seems to license some degree of idealization. In particular, democracies are to consider citizens' judgments about relevance under particular conditions of discussion and reflection (107).

Both Pitkin and Pettit argue that representatives should be responsive to citizens' interests rather than their expressed preferences, and both require representatives to engage with their constituent, via communication and contestation, when interests and preferences diverge. [65] This engagement is guided by closely-related criteria in each case: Pitkin-style representatives must be ready to provide an explanation for why they are diverging from their constituents' current views in terms of their constituents' interests, while Pettit-style representatives must seek out common interests and engage with those who contest their understanding of common interests. Both theorists, then, recognize the need to pair responsiveness to idealized citizens' views, in order to advance non-alienation, with the importance of contestation and communication to advance sovereignty.

This pairing of responsiveness to idealized views and justification of this idealization to actual citizens is a helpful framework with which to address the tradeoff between non-alienation and sovereignty. The imperative of responsiveness to interests, rather than observed public opinion, provides the flexibility to prioritize citizens' VCG in some circumstances. However, the fact that these theorists defend the need for justification and contestation shows that they

[65] Jane Mansbridge's (2003) of anticipatory representation shares a similar commitment to a communication process between representatives and constituents. According to Mansbridge, anticipatory representatives "focus on what they think their constituents will approve at the next election, not on what they promised to do at the last election" (515). Continued communication is useful for representatives in the recurring task of anticipating their constituents' future priorities, and for this reason, Mansbridge sees this approach as particularly deliberative (517-518).

acknowledge the value of sovereignty, in terms of citizens' actual views having a say. For this reason, and the aforementioned shortcomings of constructivist views, the interest-responsiveness framework provides a more useful set of resources with which to address the non-alienation/sovereignty tradeoff than the constructivist approach.

C. The Individual Action-Guidance Challenge

While existing interest-responsiveness views have these important virtues, they face at least one potential shortcoming. These views provide basic criteria for what can count as an interest to which to respond, and require that representative decisions be justified to citizens, but it is not clear they have the resources to guide individual representative behavior. Judgments about what counts as a good reason in terms of citizens' interests or about what citizens would recognize as relevant after sufficient discussion might vary wildly, and might be indeterminate. Similarly, it can be difficult to know how best to interpret public input beyond public opinion polling in a way that is responsive to citizens' VCG. One might worry, then, that in the absence of more specific action-guidance for individual representatives, these accounts simply license representatives to re-interpret indicators of citizens' views or VCG for their own purposes. The fact that citizens can demand an explanation or stage a formal protest might not sufficiently guide or constrain representative behavior. We can call this concern the individual action guidance challenge (IAGC).[66]

The IAGC might seem especially pressing given how responsiveness is deployed in public discourse, where many commentators take it to bear on what individual representatives should do. Following the alignment view, if the (perhaps overwhelming) majority of a

[66] A similar concern might also be raised against constructivist accounts, perhaps with even more force. For example, Lisa Disch (2015) discusses the concern that a constructivist focus on claim-making might provide unelected officials with a "discursive disguise" under which to make undemocratic governance appear legitimate (492).

representative's constituents were to support a particular policy decision, then that representative would have good reason to carry it out. Representation theorists that understand role obligations to be a crucial component of representation share this search for individual action guidance (Dovi 2007; Rehfeld 2009, 215). So, some might rightly criticize interest-responsiveness accounts for failing to address the complete scope of application that responsiveness is typically understood to have.

We can also further motivate this concern given the presence of political phenomena like the pervasiveness of populist rhetoric. Populist rhetoric involves an antipluralist and anti-elite approach to representation with appeals to a homogenous conception of "the people" that is juxtaposed with a corrupt elite (Kazin 1995; Müller 2016). While particular uses of such rhetoric are not necessarily harmful and can be deployed by those with a variety of political perspectives, environments where such rhetoric is pervasive can pose epistemic challenges. For example, rhetorical appeals to a homogenous conception of the people are not conducive to communicating about the heterogeneity within a population and identifying tradeoffs between different political goals. As a result, if, for example, in the lead up to a referendum, populist rhetoric is pervasive, citizens may not be in a good position to factor in the heterogeneity of perspectives between key stakeholders into their reasoning about the referendum.

For these reasons, those concerned with interest-responsive representation could rightly call into question the extent to which the referendum results would advance self-governance, understood as consisting of both sovereignty and non-alienation. A concern for non-alienation would call for other forms of public consultation, in addition to public polling and voting. However, those deploying populist rhetoric could also make use of a similar line of reasoning to further their own ends. On the one hand, they might emphasize the expressions of public opinion

that result from particular opinion polls or from public referenda, given the value of sovereignty, and on the other hand, they might appeal to an alleged unique epistemic access to understanding citizens' VCG when such indicators do not align with their goals. The challenge, then, is to develop individual action-guidance that will rule out such manipulation of either public opinion or indicators of citizens' VCG while preserving a role for both component values of self-governance. I take up this concern in the following section and argue that understanding interest-responsiveness as a fundamentally systemic quality can, perhaps counter-intuitively, help address this concern.

IV. Systemic Interest-responsiveness

Interest-responsiveness theorists, like Pitkin and Pettit, do not provide detailed criteria for how representatives should respond to citizens' interests. However, these theorists do provide some institutional recommendations based on their views. For example, Pitkin (1967) argues that representative government is defined by institutions and the way they function, rather than particular actions at a particular moment. She notes that the institutionalization of free and genuine elections is required for representative government in this sense (234).

Pettit provides more ambitious institutional recommendations than Pitkin. He argues that democracies must have the infrastructure to carry out two tasks related to responsiveness to common interests. Democracies must be able to search for and identify proposals that may reflect common interests, while also having the ability to scrutinize and disallow some proposed interests, in order to weed out influences that do not advance common interests (114-115). Recognizing the potential for disagreement about how these functions are carried out, Pettit emphasizes the importance of provisions for contestation, whereby disagreements over common interests can be registered and discussed (119-120). Contestatory provisions can include public

input processes, procedural constraints on decision-making, and appellate resources such as judicial review (122).

The fact that these theorists do not provide individual action-guidance for representatives, and offer primarily institutional recommendations, might suggest that responsiveness is primarily a feature of a system of representative institutions, rather than particular representatives.[67] On this view, we cannot antecedently determine what it means for an individual representative to be responsive in any particular case, but we can make sure that there are institutional means for citizens to register their disagreement with their representatives. Despite first appearances, this view does not render the IAGC unanswerable. While I will defend the view that responsiveness is primarily a feature of systems of institutions, I also see this view as providing specific action guidance for individual representatives, given their role in the broader representative system. Developing a more thoroughly systemic account of interest-responsiveness can also provide specific action guidance for particular representatives, as long as we have an account of what role the particular representative is supposed to play in the system.

A. Extending Systemic Responsiveness to Idealization

Eline Severs' (2010) work on systemic responsiveness provides a helpful starting point for this task. Severs understands the responsiveness of a representative body in terms of the quality of the deliberative process it undertakes (417). A representative body improves its deliberative quality to the extent that it includes more (potentially competing) perspectives held by the citizens it represents (417).[68] This is a common means of responding to heterogeneous

[67] While constructivist views tend to disavow responsiveness as a criterion, both Saward (2010, 163-164) and Disch (2011, 111) state that representation should primarily be assessed at an institutional or general level.

[68] John Dryzek (2009) articulates the related notion of deliberative capacity. He defines deliberative capacity as "as the extent to which a political system possesses structures to host deliberation that is authentic, inclusive, and consequential" (1382). He lists equal access to education, shared language, and a political culture that involves a willingness to admit uncertainty as examples of factors that facilitate deliberative capacity (1384-1386). He lists religious fundamentalism, ideological conformity, and segmental autonomy, as in consociational systems, as examples of obstructions of deliberative capacity (1386-1387).

perspectives among the articulated views of a population, with the thought that most citizens' can claim to have their perspective included in the deliberation, even if they ultimately disagree with the outcome.[69]

We can extend this approach to the representation of different levels of idealization, given the tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation. Just as individual representatives can contribute to the responsiveness of a representative body by representing a particular perspective or constituency, different representatives (or representative institutions) could be responsible for representing constituents' views with different degrees of idealization. For example, some representatives might be incentivized to take observed public opinion as the object of their responsiveness, while others might focus on idealization on the basis of information about citizens' political judgments when they are furnished with relevant information in a curated reasoning environment. This division of labor does not guarantee that responsiveness that advances sovereignty or responsiveness that advances non-alienation will win out in any particular instance, but it would set up a system where both are provided. This approach preserves some of Pettit's insights about the importance of contestatory mechanisms, as representatives who are responsible for responding to public opinion under idealization could come into conflict with those responding to observed public opinion. However, it goes beyond this proposal by recognizing the need for idealization, and providing a means for its provision, in order to advance non-alienation as well as sovereignty.

Before addressing how this proposal might provide action guidance to individual representatives, it is worth taking stock of how this view connects to my main argument so far. I

[69] Dryzek & Niemeyer (2008) defend a related view with an imperative to be inclusive of potentially conflicting perspectives. However, they argue that, rather than representing individuals, democratic representation should focus on representing the variety of discourses in the public sphere.

started by arguing that responsiveness, understood as alignment with observed public opinion, is a common criterion used to assess representatives, and that one way to motivate this criterion is to appeal to the value of self-governance. Then, I argued that self-governance has two component values, sovereignty and non-alienation, which are likely to come apart in the political domain. I then discussed two main theoretical accounts of political representation and argued that interest-responsiveness is best suited to account for the tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation. Finally, I noted that Severs' account of systemic responsiveness assesses representative bodies according to how many perspectives they include in their decision-making.

Severs' conception of systemic responsiveness is valuable because it provides a means of addressing the conflict between perspectives. Conflicting perspectives cannot always be simultaneously satisfied with each outcome, but the supporters of these perspectives are represented in the decision-making process of a systemically responsive representative body. The value of responsiveness in this sense is, yet again, closely related to self-governance, and it is this value that connects my argument so far to this proposal. In the case of Severs' conception of systemic responsiveness as deliberative quality, collective self-governance requires a compromise between granting any particular perspective a final say. The compromise that systemic responsiveness provides is to grant many perspectives an input on the process that leads to a final say. This same approach can extend to the tradeoff between non-alienation and sovereignty because of some shared features of the problem. Again, we face a tension between components of self-governance that cannot be mutually satisfied in each instance. In the case of systemic interest-responsiveness, the tension extends beyond competing perspectives reflected in observed public opinion, to also include perspectives that reflect indicators of citizens' VCG, and public opinion under idealization. Insofar as there is value in providing input via systemically

responsive representation in the tradeoff between granting sovereignty to different perspectives, there should also be value in providing input via representation that advances sovereignty and non-alienation.

B. Responding to the Individual Action Guidance Challenge

We now have an argument for a system of representation that encourages responsiveness to the public with different levels of idealization away from observed public opinion, but how does this address the individual action guidance challenge? Again, the case of responsiveness to competing perspectives is instructive. Individual representatives can represent a particular constituency or perspective and by doing so, contribute to the deliberative quality of the representative body in which they operate. In virtue of the systemic goal of representing as many perspectives as possible, individual representatives inherit specific role obligations to act on behalf of the particular constituents or perspective they represent. Similarly, were a representative system to have a functioning division of labor between representatives responsive to observed public opinion and idealized public opinion (informed by citizens' VCG), then representatives would inherit specific role obligations based on what they are tasked with representing.

However, in many cases, the balance of these representative functions is imperfect. There might be some constituencies that are not represented by any representative. In those circumstances, a representative concerned with the deliberative quality of the overall system could also seek to represent those who are under-represented, and thereby improve the deliberative quality of the system.[70] Consider Jane Mansbridge's (2003) conception of surrogate

[70] Jonathan Kuyper (2016) makes a related point by arguing that nonelectoral representatives should be assessed according to their contributions to the deliberative capacity of a democratic system. He holds that nonelectoral representatives can make positive contributions to deliberative capacity of a democratic system even when they are internally undemocratic or undeliberative, and even when their actions in public space are antideliberative. This might be the case when nonelectoral representatives take antideliberative actions like bargaining and contestation, but these action remedy democratic deficiencies

representation as an example. Surrogate representation, according to Mansbridge, "occurs when legislators represent constituents outside their own districts (515). She discussed the example of Barney Frank, who was a representative of Massachusetts, yet also consciously saw himself as a surrogate representative for gay and lesbian citizens throughout the U.S. She notes that Frank felt a special responsibility to these citizens, as one of very few openly gay members of Congress, and in light of the obstacles gay and lesbian citizens face to becoming politically active themselves due to prejudice (523). In this case, Franks' responsiveness to citizens outside his district enhances the deliberative quality of the U.S. Congress by including the perspective of gay and lesbian citizens, who were otherwise under-represented. Similarly, in the case of a representative system where representatives are concerned with sovereignty, but non-alienation has been neglected, then representatives concerned with systemic responsiveness should act so as to advance non-alienation, all else equal.

When representatives find themselves in a situation where they face a tradeoff between advancing sovereignty and non-alienation, they should consider: 1) the formal role they occupy in the overall representative system and 2) the current balance of responsiveness that advances sovereignty and non-alienation within the representative system. In situations where observed public opinion is being given more weight in the representative system, a representative concerned with responsiveness should seek out evidence of citizens' VCG and try to respond to idealized public opinion. However, in situations where more weight is being given to citizens' VCG in a representative system, a responsive representative should seek out evidence about citizens' current attitudes and try to respond to observed public opinion. In either case,

among representatives who are empowered to make coercive rules, laws, and decisions (313-315). Kuyper gives the example of private, non-profit organizations like the Electronic Frontier Foundation and Oxfam, who contested the ACTA, an international agreement concerning intellectual property law (316-318).

representatives consider their marginal impact on interest-responsiveness at a systemic level, and these considerations provide action-guidance.[71]

This framework provides the individual action guidance required to respond to the IAGC. Consider the challenge posed by environments where populist rhetoric is pervasive. Exacerbating such an environment by relying on populist rhetorical strategies can impede the representation of diverse views, given such rhetoric's reliance on a homogenous conception of "the people." As a result, using populist rhetoric hinders systemic interest-responsiveness, even if representatives do so in a way that aligns with the observed public opinion of their constituents. Instead, advancing systemic interest-responsiveness in an environment where populist rhetoric is pervasive would involve amplifying alternative perspectives, seeking out alternative forms of public input that may serve as indicators of citizens' VCG, and searching for evidence of citizens' VCG that are robust across different groups and reasoning contexts. These efforts would enhance the *systemic* interest-responsiveness of the system of institutions in which particular representatives operate, which may come apart from the particular indicators of public opinion or VCG that a particular populist representative may use to bolster a homogenous conception of the interests to which they should respond.

Furthermore, in circumstances where multiple individual representatives are all concerned with their contributions to systemic interest-responsiveness, they can coordinate their efforts to formalize the representative division of labor that I have proposed via institutional reforms. This would be an advisable strategy for groups of representatives to pursue because

[71] There is a further question about whether sovereignty and non-alienation should be given equal weight within a representative system or if, in fact, the weight that each should be given can also be context sensitive. This question is deserving of its own paper, so I cannot take it up here, though I hope to do so in the future. If the weight assigned to each value should vary across different contexts, it seems to me that an important consideration should be current levels of trust and corruption in the representative system. In circumstances where corruption is rampant and trust in the representative system is low, it might make sense to prioritize sovereignty with an eye toward improving the political environment to better pursue non-alienation in the future.

institutional reforms that can formalize the provision of responsiveness that advances sovereignty and non-alienation provide a more stable foundation for self-governance than relying on individual representative action. On this basis, I now turn to institutional design lessons that follow from systemic interest-responsiveness.

V. Institutional Design Lessons

A. Administrative Agencies as an Example of the Representative Division of Labor

Unlike with the representation of heterogeneity of articulated views, we cannot simply elect representatives on the basis of idealized public opinion and citizens' VCG. So, there is a question about how to achieve this representative division of labor. Replicating existing electoral mechanisms would seem to lead back to the alignment approach, which I have argued does not adequately advance non-alienation. However, there is an already existing division of representative labor in the U.S. federal government, which provides a useful starting point: administrative agencies that have some degree of independence from elected representatives.

To see why this is the case, it is worth first getting clear on what it means for an agency to be independent. Jennifer Selin (2015) defines an agency, in the context of the U.S. Federal government, as "any executive entity led by one or more political appointees appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate and any subpart of such entity that both Congress and the president recognize as organizationally distinct" (972). This definition includes large entities like the Department of Homeland Security (similar to an interior ministry in other governments), and smaller entities like the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, which is a component of the Department of Homeland Security. Agencies are typically considered independent to the extent that they are insulated from the influence of elected officials and interest groups.

Traditionally, the independence of agencies has been secured with limitations on their leadership. Most importantly, this involves protections from the removal of agency heads except for cause (rather than at will by the president), though it is also common to require a multimember leadership body with fixed terms (Barkow 2010, 6-10; Selin 2015, 972). However, scholars have noted that these limitations are neither necessary nor sufficient for independence. Agencies with a higher ratio of political appointees tend to succumb to presidential influence (Lowande 2019), while congress can use agencies' insulation from the president to work against opposition party presidents (Devins & Lewis 2008; Corrigan & Revesz 2017). In light of these limitations, it is worth noting that the independence of administrative agencies tends to fall on a spectrum and is a function of a variety of mechanisms. Additional mechanisms that promote independence include: 1) whether an agency's funding is independent of presidential review (Barkow 2010, 11-12; Selin 2015, 975), 2) regulations on agency employees, such as professional requirements or limitations on post employment in regulated industries (Barkow 2010, 12-13), 3) political conventions that threaten sanctions to those who interfere with agencies (Vermeule 2011), and 4) political tools to make agencies' missions more salient to the public, such as the authority to gather and release information to the public (Barkow 2010, 11; 25). [72]

Agencies with some or all of these independence-promoting features are designed to serve a different representative function than elected officials. They typically have a relatively narrow mandate that is seen to be in the public interest, rather than being responsible for

[72] Rachel Barkow (2010) offers an illustrative comparison between the Consumer Products Safety Commission and the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau. The Consumer Products Safety Commission, despite having some of the hallmarks of independence, had its budget cut, and as a result, was left ill-equipped relative to the private companies it was meant to regulate (20-21). The Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, in contrast, seems to fare better with regard to these additional mechanisms for independence. Most importantly, it has the authority to gather information, e.g., by requiring regulated firms to respond to its requests, and then release it to the public in aggregate form. This authority, Barkow contends, helps to insulate the agency because it can gather public attention and support even when facing resistance from Congress or the President (25).

responding to their constituents' views in general.[73] Additionally, administrative agencies can carry out their mandate, even when it comes apart from public opinion at a particular time, in virtue of their insulation from electoral pressures. This functional role is quite different from that of an elected official that is responsive to observed public opinion and can stand in tension with advancing the sovereignty of their constituents. If administrative agencies' mandates align with citizens' values, commitments, and goals, they could serve to advance non-alienation. Yet, administrative agencies are also not wholly independent of elected officials. Agency leaders can be appointed and approved by elected officials, and elected officials are often responsible for monitoring agency performance based on their mandates.

This relationship between agencies and elected officials suggests that administrative agencies are well positioned to make a distinctive contribution to responsiveness in service of self-governance. In virtue of their narrow mandates that are intended to serve the public interest and their insulation from electoral pressures, administrative agencies can better promote non-alienation than elected officials with incentives to align with observed public opinion. This combination of these two positions in a broader system of representation provides one instantiation of the division of representative labor that is called for by systemic interest-responsiveness.

As an example of how agencies and elected representatives already function in complementary ways, consider Henry Richardson's (2002) discussion of the Biaggi Amendment. Mario Biaggi was a House Representative from the Bronx, who introduced an amendment to the Urban Mass Transit Act (UMTA), which "declared that 'elderly and handicapped persons' had

[73] Insofar as this is not the case, and agencies face competing mandates, agency performance tends to suffer (Carrigan 2018, 670). One problem this creates is that agencies have to assume conflicting positions with respect to the targets of their programs. Carrigan (2018) suggests that agencies faced with competing priorities should clarify objectives when possible and separate units working on conflicted purposes through revisions to agencies' organization (678).

the same ‘right’ to use mass transit as anyone else and that ‘special efforts’ must be made to design systems of transportation to make them accessible to such persons” (98). Officials within the Department of Transportation (DOT), which had to administer the UMTA, debated two competing interpretations. One interpretation emphasized efficiency and would involve alternative services for the elderly and disabled, such as van services, to avoid the cost of retrofitting transit systems. The other interpretation called for mainstreaming, whereby existing transit systems would be modified to become accessible for the elderly and disabled (98).

Richardson describes how, in considering different ways of administering the UMTA, the DOT had to deliberate about how best to advance different ends and make them cohere. These ends included: making transportation systems accessible to the disabled, managing the costs of accessibility, and avoiding discrimination against the disabled. As part of its decision-making process, the DOT held hearings and collected comments from 870 individual and organizational stakeholders. Through this decision-making process, the DOT’s reasoning exceeded the bounds of cost-benefit analysis to identify a new end: to mainstream the disabled into existing transit networks (108-109). This is a useful example of how elected representatives and administrative agencies can both contribute to responsiveness. Mario Biaggi acted to introduce the amendment to the UMTA, as an elected legislative representative, and created an imperative for policy action. However, DOT officials, through their role in an administrative agency, also made a distinct contribution to responsiveness by collecting public input and reasoning about how best to advance citizens’ VCG.

B. The Need for Innovative Public Input Mechanisms

A representative division of labor, even with successful mechanisms to preserve the independence of administrative agencies, does not provide a complete set of grounds for

systemic interest-responsiveness. After all, a set of independent agencies with no reliable evidence about citizens' VCG, and how they relate to policy, could devolve into autocratic or technocratic rule, which would threaten sovereignty (and could also threaten non-alienation). So, an increase in concern for non-alienation should not diminish the importance of citizen participation. In order for those working in administrative agencies to be *responsive* to citizens, they need effective public input about citizens' values, commitments, goals, and how they relate to policy decision-making. Therefore, we need improved mechanisms for public input to promote systemic interest-responsiveness. In the paragraphs that follow, I will describe a few ways of doing so, each with an increasing degree of ambition.

At the lowest level of ambition, public opinion data collection could expand to include more information about the VCG underlying citizens' policy preferences. As things currently stand, representatives can be assessed according to their alignment with observed public opinion, but it is difficult to tell if that responsiveness is effectively realizing the reasons that underlie citizens' expressed judgments. If equipped with better information about the reasons that citizens have for their policy preferences, representatives would be in a better position to determine when citizens' VCG are not being advanced and try to model what citizens views might look like under better conditions.

A more ambitious step would be to expand the role of citizen panels in political decision-making. Citizen panels are fora for lay citizens to "meet for a few days to learn about and discuss one or more complex political issues", often conferring with an expert panel and publicizing their conclusions (Brown 2006, 204).[74] Citizen panels differ with respect to their format and

[74] Citizen panels are also sometimes called "mini-publics." See Setälä & Smith (2018) for an overview of the different kinds of mini-publics/citizen panels, empirical evidence about their effects, and the normative arguments for and against their role in contemporary political decision-making.

output. For example, deliberative polls bring together a random sample of citizens to review informational materials, consult experts, and discuss a particular issue or set of issues with one another. Participants are given a survey both before and after participation, so that changes in their views, due to participation in this process, can be tracked (Fishkin 1995 40-44; 166-175; Fishkin & Farrar 2005, 72-75). Consensus conferences, in contrast, assemble a group of citizens (sometimes with a stratified sample, rather than a random one) to engage in dialogue with a panel of experts, usually focused on a particular domain of science or technology, and produce a report that expresses the conclusions that participants were able to agree upon, often accompanied with a press conference (Guston 1999, 454-456; Blok 2007, 167).

Citizen panels hold the promise of providing public input under improved conditions where citizens have better access to relevant information and expertise, and have had the chance to consider and discuss a particular set of issues.[75] As a result, representatives could use the outputs of citizen panels as source of evidence about how to advance citizens' VCG.[76] The extent to which citizen panels can fulfill this promise depends on their actual effects on citizens as they are, and the outputs they provide from participating in these panels. While continued empirical investigation would be useful to compare the different forms of citizen panels and what effects

[75] Another, related form of public input that has recently been developed is participatory value evaluation (PVE). PVE is intended to address concerns about the use of cost benefit analysis to inform public policy decisions. PVE elicits citizens' judgments about different potential public sector projects given budget constraints and captures information about the reasons underlying these judgments. In recent experiments, PVE has been conducted by providing citizens with a budget to allocate between an array of potential infrastructure and water management projects. It shares some of the key features of citizen panels by providing citizens with information, but instead of encouraging discussion or deliberation, PVE collects individual judgments and policy decisions, and then aggregates them. So, PVE and citizen panels might be complementary forms of public input, as they can provide different forms of information about citizens' attitudes. For more information about this form of public input, see: Mouter, Koster, and Dekker (2019).

[76] Technological advancements can also make such forms of public consultation more feasible. Neblo, Esterling & Lazer (2018) have developed, and tested, an online deliberative town hall platform through which representatives can consult with their constituents. They tested the platform with twelve members of the U.S. House of Representatives who took part in one-hour online deliberative town halls on immigration reform (though they also replicated their findings with other topics). The deliberative town hall set up bears many similarities to deliberative polling with pre and post participant surveys, briefing materials, and a neutral moderator, with the key added feature of direct, real-time consultation with an elected representative. For more on the online deliberative town hall design, see Chapter 2 of Neblo, Esterling & Lazer (2018).

can be expected from each, there has been some notable empirical research on deliberative polls in particular. There is fairly substantial evidence that participants in deliberative polls learn relevant information, have significant changes in opinions, and that those who learn the most tend to account for most of the changes in opinion (Fishkin & Luskin 2005, 290-292). Furthermore, there is some evidence that participation in small group deliberation, as part of deliberative polls, increases participants' understanding of arguments from those that have differing views (Andersen & Hansen 2007, 542). This change in understanding might guard against some of the biases that would otherwise affect citizens' political judgments.

Finally, at the most ambitious level, we could improve systemic interest-responsiveness by creating what Jennifer Lees-Marshment (2015) calls a Ministry of Public Input (or perhaps, a Department of Public Input as an independent administrative agency in the U.S. context). The Ministry of Public Input is a distinct government ministry (or agency) with the task of collecting public input, as well as interpreting, and disseminating it to other parts of the government. Lees-Marshment compares the role of such an entity to an electoral commission, which is a central government organization, but also regulates the activities of other parts of the government and runs its own initiatives (namely, elections) (226). This is a helpful analogy in this context because elections are an important mechanism through which sovereignty is advanced. A concern for non-alienation would seem to motivate a parallel organization concerned with the mechanisms through which non-alienation is advanced, such as the public surveys and citizen panels I have already discussed. Lees-Marshment proposes that the ministry have four main components:

1. Government Liaison Team: collects government input on public input collection, reports, and government's responses to public input reports.

2. Public Input Collection Unit: collects public input and sends results to be processed.
3. Public Input Processing Unit: analyzes and produced reports on public input and disseminates them.
4. Public Development Office: develops public skills and participation for more effective input (227).

By carrying out these four functions, a separate ministry could provide various forms of evidence about citizens' views and VCG to both elected officials and administrative agencies. By assigning this function to a distinct, independent entity, governments would be better positioned to prevent representative manipulation of public input processes. This ambitious proposal would also allow for the pooling of public input when the domains of different decision-makers overlap. The creation of a ministry of public input is probably not a feasible goal in the short term future in contexts like the U.S., but it would provide the most extensive public input mechanism through which to pursue responsiveness to idealized public opinion, and so it is a long term goal that is worth keeping in mind.

VI. Conclusion

I started this chapter by arguing that responsiveness, understood as alignment with observed public opinion, is a common criterion used to assess representatives, and that one way to motivate this criterion is to appeal to the value of self-governance. Then, I argued that self-governance has two component values, sovereignty and non-alienation, which are likely to come apart in the political domain. I proceeded to discuss the two main theoretical accounts of political representation and argued that interest-responsiveness is best suited to account for the tradeoff between sovereignty and non-alienation. Despite initial appearances to the contrary, I argued that even though interest-responsiveness is best understood as a systemic quality, it can still provide

specific action guidance for individual representatives, based on their contributions to the balance of sovereignty and non-alienation in the overall representative system. Finally, I argued that a concern for systemic interest-responsiveness can guide institutional design and offered two examples: the independence of administrative agencies for creating a division of representative labor and the need for expanded public input mechanisms in order to guide inferences about idealized public opinion.

As this summary indicates, I started this chapter with an observation about a common standard applied to representatives and ended with a set of individual and institutional recommendations that look quite different from the common sense understanding of this standard. My hope is that this chapter demonstrates the importance of examining the values that underlie political institutions and how they interact under non-ideal circumstances, as this kind of examination can lead to surprising recommendations, as in this case.

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Chapter 3: Civic Education and Epistemic Civic Virtue

Introduction

Appeals to the need for civic education are commonly featured in contemporary op-eds and political debates. These appeals often follow a perceived political mistake, as when, two days after the presidential election in 2016, *The Atlantic* ran a piece with the headline: "Is Trump's Victory the Jump-Start Civics Education Needed?" (Kahlenbern & Janey 2016). However, calls for civic education are not exclusive to concerns about any particular elected official or political party. A politically diverse array of outlets has published concerns about civic education in recent years, including the *Chronicle of Higher Education, Fox News*, *Mother Jones, The National Review,* and *The Washington Post* (Bok 2017; Stirewalt 2019; Rizga 2017; Addison 2017; Harris 2018). Furthermore, civic education is seen as a way to achieve a variety of goals, such as increasing political participation (Shavin 2019), reducing political inequality and promoting the integration of immigrants into civic life (Khadaroo 2019), cultivating patriotism (Pondiscio 2019), and demonstrating the value of diversity and dissent (Kalin 2016). However, what might seem like the object of agreement among otherwise diverse political viewpoints is actually yet another political battleground, whereby stakeholders have very different views of what civic education should look like. For example, the Florida state legislature recently passed a civic education bill that lists outside groups, which will provide input on the state curriculum. This bill was criticized for an ideologically skew toward conservative or Christian organizations (Rado 2019).

This false appearance of agreement and underlying diversity of opinion can make civic education an especially intractable domain. But, I will argue here that it also presents an important opportunity, given the social epistemic challenges facing established democracies like the U.S. We do not need to reach wide-ranging agreement about the political goals of civic education in order to justify civic education efforts, and make use of their benefits to promote long run improvements to civic engagement in democracies. Instead, we can leverage the social epistemic benefits that accrue from citizens' capabilities to learn and communicate in the presence of diversity. The ways in which civic education can facilitate learning and exposure to diverse others, which I call the civic exchange function of civic education, provide a way forward that can contribute to efforts to address social epistemic challenges to democracy.

I will start in Section I by introducing a common strategy among theorists who argue in favor of civic education, which is to argue that it contributes to a public good. I will outline the basic structure of these arguments and adapt it to offer an epistemic version, which appeals to the value of promoting epistemic civic virtue as a contribution to improving our social epistemic environment. In Section II, I will argue that epistemic civic virtue consists of three main components: civic knowledge, the capacity to learn and communicate in the presence of diversity, and what I call a "social epistemic mindset." In Section III, I will argue that civic education, in the form of civics courses in formal schooling, provides a promising means of promoting epistemic civic virtue, and thereby contributing to a public good. In Section IV, I distinguish the civic exchange function of civic education from the value promotion function, and argue that an emphasis on the former can promote epistemic civic virtue without a settled view on the latter. Finally, in Section V, I discuss objections to civic education that appeal to the threats of social engineering and indoctrination. I argue that while these objections impose limits

on the form that civic education can take, my emphasis on civic exchange provides resources with which to manage these concerns.

I. Civic Education as an Epistemic Public Good

A. Existing Public Good Arguments for Civic Education

Theorists often advocate for civic education by arguing that it is itself a public good or contributes to a public good as part of its aims, though the details of the public good in question vary from theorist to theorist. For example, Meira Levinson (1999) identifies sustaining the liberal state as a public good to which education can contribute:

> The stability and perpetuation of the liberal state is a public good which, like all public goods, is freely and equally available to all. To enjoy the benefits of a public good without contributing to its maintenance and preservation, however, is to free-ride. Passive citizens in a liberal democracy, therefore, end up free-riding on the responsibility and dedication exercised by their more active compatriots. It does not violate children's future autonomy to teach them not to free ride any more than it violates their autonomy to teach them other moral virtues such as honesty, generosity, and sympathy. (106).

Following this line of reasoning, teaching children to develop autonomy and become civically engaged is justified because it enables students to contribute to a public good, in the form of the maintenance of the liberal state.

Other theorists argue that civic education contributes to public goods related to democracy, such as by improving the quality and quantity of civic participation. For example, Peter Levine (2007) argues that civic education contributes to the strength, justice, and robustness of democracies by preparing citizens for skillful and committed participation (XIII). He identifies civic education of this kind as a shared responsibility of multiple stakeholders in a democracy, and argues that governments and social movements can be justified in applying leverage to change the priorities of schools, given that civic participation is a public good (XIII; 105). While focusing on democracy instead of liberalism, Levine follows a similar line of

reasoning to Levinson. Civic participation is a public good because it contributes to the strength, justice, and robustness of democracies and civic education efforts are a way for individuals and institutions to discharge their shared responsibility to contribute to this good.

Even more generally, Curren & Dorn (2018) describe the aim of civic education in terms of well-being in a world that requires cooperation (118). They defend the promotion of virtuous patriotism as part of this pursuit of well-being through cooperation, which involves a "special commitment to the good of one's country," as well as a "wider responsiveness to the value of persons and prerequisites of their flourishing everywhere" (99-100). Unlike the prior two theorists, Curren & Dorn do not restrict their claim appeal to a particular set of institutions, such as liberalism or democracy, but rather see civic education as valuable insofar as it prepares citizens to flourish and promote the flourishing of those around them.

Even theorists who identify problems with the distinction between public and private goods, such as Danielle Allen (2016), endorse similar claims about the broad (intended) benefits of civic education. Allen argues that the public/private distinction suggests that we face a tension, when in fact, in the case of education, public and private goods should align, such that education can promote the utilitarian goals of the state and the flourishing of individual citizens (18). Instead, she suggests, we should distinguish our justification of education as a practice at the social level and at the individual level, and assess the costs and benefits of education practices using social and individual criteria in separate evaluative processes (19). The social level of education involves an appeal to the wide scope of benefits of civic education to articulate a justification for it, from the perspective of the state. So, this social evaluative process would involve appealing to broad, social benefits like the ones identified by the aforementioned theorists.

Each of these theorists takes civic education to contribute to large-scale social and political goods that extend beyond the interaction between any particular citizen and their educating institution. One way to capture this thought is to say that civic education is meant to produce positive externalities, which are benefits that accrue to third parties beyond an initial transaction. In this case, the presence of civically educated citizens benefits others by strengthening and improving liberal, democratic, or cooperative institutions, whether or not those third parties have themselves undergone this training and made such contributions. This is one way to understand the claim that civic education contributes to a public good, which might include benefits like being governed by liberal or democratic political institutions, or co-habiting spaces with citizens who promote your flourishing.[77]

This expectation of positive externalities is important because it provides a rationale for the provision of civic education. Since the benefits of civic education extend beyond those who directly undergo it, individual decisions alone will tend to under-provide civic education in the aggregate, as those third parties are not part of the decision to undergo it. Such a situation creates the threat of free-riding, whereby some citizens enjoy the benefits of civic education without contributing to its provision. On this basis, some might argue that the state should take an active role in promoting civic education beyond the levels of provision that would arise without state action. There are a few forms that this step in the argument might take. As illustrated in the Levinson quote above, one can argue that civic education is a way to teach citizens not to free-ride on the efforts of others to maintain the institutions under which they live, and so civic

[77] On the typical economic understanding of public goods, such goods have two key characteristics: they are non-rivalrous and non-excludable. When a good is rivalrous, its consumption by one consumer prevents others from consuming it. When a good is excludable, it is possible to prevent those who have not paid for them from consuming them. Civic education might not itself be non-rivalrous nor non-excludable because my consumption of it might indeed prevent others from receiving civic education based on limited space and teacher time, while students who have not paid tuition could be excluded from attending classes. However, some of the large-scale social and political goods that theorists take civic education to contribute towards, such as the stability of liberal institutions or justice of democratic institutions, do seem relatively non-rivalrous and non-excludable.

education does not pose much of a threat to citizens' autonomy. Relatedly, following Allen, one can argue that civic education provides a way of aligning private and public interests, such that preparing citizens to contribute to liberal and/or democratic institutions also helps them to advance for their own interests. Finally, one might appeal to the relative weight of the positive externalities of civic education, as compared to concerns about coercion or objections to the costs of civic education, to justify its pursuit by the state or other publicly accountable actors.[78]

From these different examples, we have a common framework with which to motivate and assess civic education efforts. We can justify civic education initiatives with appeal to the positive externalities that follow from them, and we can assess civic education efforts according to their ability to create those positive externalities, and the value of those externalities relative to the costs of civic education.

B. Epistemic Public Good Argument

Many of the public good arguments discussed above appeal to the benefits of sustaining a particular set of political institutions or political rights. However, as I argued in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, the value of our institutional infrastructure can depend on background conditions about our social environment. In particular, the extent to which a variety of particular values can be realized through democracy can depend on the extent to which citizens are equipped to advance their interests through the infrastructure of democracy, which consists of electoral mechanisms and political rights. Furthermore, features of the social epistemic environment in

[78] Other theorists of civic education do not explicitly appeal to conceptions of civic education as contributing to public goods, but they do appeal to particular benefits or aims of civic education, which we might also think of as potential positive externalities. For example, Eamonn Callan (1997) argues that liberal democracies need their citizens to develop imaginative sympathy for their fellow citizens with different political perspectives, as well as an awareness of the importance of the responsibilities that accompany the rights of others (8). The capacity for imaginative sympathy and awareness of citizens' rights would contribute to the robustness of those rights under a liberal regime, which would benefit all citizens who enjoy those rights, whether or not any particular citizen contributed to this benefit by developing this capacity and awareness through civic education.

which citizens operate can determine the extent to which they are equipped to do so. I will briefly reiterate this line of reasoning in order to show how it can be used as a rationale for an alternative, epistemic form of a public good argument for civic education.

Democracy, through the provision of electoral mechanisms and political rights, provides an infrastructure through which citizens can influence the laws and policies that govern them. Citizens can, through activities like voting and protest, make use of this infrastructure to advance their interests. However, these attempts at public input can fail to do so when citizens are unable to acquire and reason about information that bears on advancing their interests. Most notably, citizens need to be able to reason about how different policy proposals might facilitate or hinder their values, commitments, and goals. Since citizens have differential access to information, the ability to communicate with others to gather information can enhance these reasoning processes. In addition, citizens can identify or forge shared interests through such communication, and advance these interests by coordinating political activities in coalitions with one another. Nonetheless, citizens will not always agree, and communication is required, even in these circumstances, to identify tradeoffs and feasibility constraints that result from this disagreement. For example, a group of activists' most preferred policy outcome related to health care reform may not be feasible, given the existing distribution of citizens' views about taxes, and so those citizens might instead benefit from devoting their efforts to promote their second-most preferred outcome, in light of this information.

The current social epistemic environment in the U.S. poses a set of challenges to the ability to carry out this kind of reasoning and communication. These challenges include polarization, ethnocentrism, populist narratives, and difficulties of communication between

social identity groups.[79] By impeding reasoning and communication processes that promote political learning, these challenges limit the extent to which citizens can make use of the infrastructure of democracy to advance their interests. We can say that the social epistemic environment is "unhealthy" to the extent that it hinders the development and exercise of the capacities to reason and communicate about one's interests, much like a social environment can be more or less conducive to promoting biological health.[80]

When determining how to respond to these challenges, it is worth noting that they are maintained, at least in part, by citizens' dispositions. Polarization is maintained and enhanced by partisans' tendency to diminish their exposure to opposing information and to exhibit negative reactions when presented with it. Similarly, ethnocentric appeals are useful only because some citizens are especially predisposed to be motivated by them. In this way, citizens' habits and dispositions, and the environment in which they operate, are interdependent (and might operate in a feedback loop). For this reason, it might be especially fruitful to directly target citizens' habits and dispositions as a means of combatting these challenges.

The republican tradition of civic virtue invokes a similar set of claims. For republicans, the successful realization of freedom depends on citizens' habits and dispositions, which are meant to uphold the social and institutional environment to reproduce these qualities in future generations. For example, the habit of robust participation in civic associations (and the skills

[79] These phenomena are social epistemic challenges because they restrict citizens' access to relevant information about advancing their interests, and affect their ability to communicate, learn, and process information in an unbiased manner. We can think of biases as factors that reduce the robustness of citizens' political learning and reasoning. Learning and reasoning processes are biased to the extent that they are sensitive to factors that do not bear on formulating accurate judgments or advancing citizens' interests. As a result, these processes are less reliable routes to accurate beliefs and correspondence between political activity and citizens' interests.

[80] It does not follow from this claim that an improvement in the social epistemic environment will lead to an improvement in every single citizen's satisfaction, as some citizens can be advantaged by their fellow citizens' diminished capacities to communicate and reason about their interests. However, this is not a unique feature of social epistemic public goods. For example, some citizens might disprefer investment in public defense because they are well-positioned to offer private defense services.

this requires) maintains these associations into the future. These habits and skills are cultivated, in turn, through these associations.[81] While some liberals have resisted this view as demanding of citizens, others have argued that civic virtue is necessary for the maintenance of liberal societies.[82]

Insofar as the challenging environment in the U.S. can also be characterized by this kind of interdependence, the cultivation of civic virtue provides a useful way forward. Given the presence of democratic input mechanisms, citizens need to be able to learn, reason, and communicate about their interests, in order to advance their interests through these mechanisms. Our capacity to do so is diminished by broader features of our social environment, which our own habits and dispositions uphold. So, much as republicans develop an account of civic virtue (i.e., participation in civic life and a concern for checks on concentrated power) and how to cultivate it (i.e., strengthening labor or community organizations), we can do the same for a distinctively epistemic conception of civic virtue to address these epistemic challenges.

Civic education can serve as a mechanism to promote epistemic civic virtue. Civic education shapes citizen's civic habits and skills, and is often aimed at the promotion of political knowledge. It targets the same mechanisms that drive social epistemic challenges to democracy and has the capability to affect many citizens at once, which is important given that these challenges persist through the civic habits and dispositions of citizens in many different contexts and groups. Furthermore, a social environment characterized by citizens with habits and skills that counter-act the effects of challenges like polarization and ethnocentrism would provide better opportunities for many citizens to learn, reason, and communicate about their interests. As

[81] See, e .g., Sandel (1996), Hadenius (2001), and Gourevitch (2015).
[82] See Galston (1991), Audi (1998), and Macedo (2000) for examples of theorists who advocate civic virtue(s) in order to sustain liberal values and institutions. See Burtt (1993) for an argument that attempts to promote public-oriented civic virtue, whether liberal or republican, are unlikely to succeed.

with the other conceptions of civic education discussed above, this improvement of the social epistemic environment would provide positive externalities that would accrue even to citizens who do not develop epistemic civic virtue or contribute to its development. For example, they would be able to communicate with citizens who are better positioned to understand the interests of others as a result of civic education efforts.[83] We can motivate civic education efforts aimed at improving the social epistemic environment with appeal to these positive externalities, and assess these efforts according to the degree to which they promote such externalities, relative to their costs.

II. What Epistemic Civic Virtue Looks Like

A. Case Studies of Epistemic Civic Virtue

One way that social challenges like polarization and ethnocentrism pose a challenge to effective public input is by impeding effective communication between citizens with different information and perspectives. This can be the case because citizens do not have opportunities to communicate with those with different information and perspectives, or when they do communicate, the information from others is processed in a biased fashion. Citizens in an environment characterized by these phenomena can end up ill equipped to notice when the policies promoted by political leaders or fellow group members diverge from their interests, and to recognize when their interests align with those with alternative perspectives (who might be

[83] Of course, some citizens might be left worse off in a healthier social epistemic environment for citizens to learn, reason, and communicate about their interests. For example, some vendors may lose government contracts as a result of policy changes driven by changes in learning, reasoning, and communication. However, the same is true for most of the non-epistemic public goods to which other civic education theorists appeal, such as when citizens make use of the infrastructure of democracy or liberal rights to influence policy. The relevant justification just requires good reason to think that the benefits will exceed the costs, and that the relevant positive externalities will benefit a large portion of the citizenry. One reason to think that improvements in the social epistemic environment would meet this burden is that they would allow many citizens to better advance their interests through the political engagement, thereby enabling progress on collective problems with especially high stakes, such as climate change. I offer further reasons to think that the costs of civic education efforts to skeptical citizens can be managed in Section V below.

useful coalition partners). So, epistemic civic virtue must involve the disposition and skills to notice when such epistemic impediments arise and take action to communicate in spite of them.

To illustrate this point, I return to some examples of epistemic civic virtue that I discussed in Chapter 1. One useful example comes from the work of Ayaz Virji, a doctor in rural Minnesota, who is Muslim. Virji takes part in public speaking engagements in various towns across Minnesota where he gives lectures and answers questions from the audience about Islam (McCrummen 2017). By taking on these speaking engagements, Virji exposes his fellow citizens to a set of narratives and information, which are not readily available in their immediate social epistemic environment. In so doing, he can serve as a unique information source for many in attendance, dispel false or distorted beliefs, and establish the basis for future communication with those who may not otherwise have pursued it due to Islamophobia.

This habit of recognizing impediments to learning and communication, and trying to address them, provides a good example of epistemic civic virtue. Such activities can help citizens to develop their communicative capacities, and help them to better reason about their own interests by furnishing novel information and countering some of their existing biases. These efforts, in turn, create new pathways for communication and coalition-building that would otherwise be left unrealized.

The case of Virji is one of an individual initiating efforts to improve an epistemic environment. However, epistemic civic virtue can also involve the collective maintenance of an existing, especially productive, epistemic environment, as exemplified by the other key example from Chapter 1: Dan Kahan's (2015) research on local action to address climate change in Southeast Florida. Kahan describes how local civic actors have been able to build broader coalitions to address climate change than are typically seen at the national level. One reason is

that public officials and stakeholders have worked to promote partnerships in local climate action initiatives that affirm different value commitments, while discouraging ways of framing discussions that make partisan identities salient and threaten participants' values (33-36). In this way, these citizens maintain a shared, healthier epistemic environment in which to discuss continued action against climate change in their community, and how their interests relate to the actions they can take.

B. Components of Epistemic Civic Virtue

In an attempt to generalize beyond these particular examples, I now want to specify what components of epistemic civic virtue the civic actors in these cases display. First, both Virji and the Florida climate actors demonstrated some baseline of civic knowledge. In order to successfully carry out their civic activities, they needed to know about the relevant stakeholders in their community, how to contact them, and what information they would find useful. Virji needed to know what kinds of institutions would host an event with him and would attract the audience he hoped to reach, and what kinds of questions attendees might have about Islam. Similarly, climate actors in Florida needed to know how to engage the public, how climate change affects their community, and what tools local officials have at their disposal to respond to climate change.

However, the epistemic civic virtue in these cases goes well beyond civic knowledge. The success of these civic actors also involved the skills to leverage the diversity of information and potential for disagreement in their environment for political learning (and action).[84] Virji was

[84] Arthur Lupia (2016) argues that civic educators can make use of knowledge of value diversity to recruit learners from increasingly diverse populations (116). The ability to gather and make use of this information is certainly part of epistemic civic virtue. However, I do not restrict this component of epistemic civic virtue to value diversity because it is possible for citizens to agree on values, but for communication to break down in light of diversity of prior experiences and information. In many (perhaps most) cases, these differences in experience and information might coincide with differences in value commitments, but this need not be the case.

able to make use of the different set of information he has access to in virtue of his experiences, in order to create an environment where others could learn, even from questions that would be perceived as hostile or offensive in other contexts. Those working on climate action in South Florida intentionally sought out a diverse set of stakeholders and pursued a communication strategy that avoided partisan framing. As a result, they were able to productively communicate on an issue that often reaches an impasse in other political contexts due to challenges like polarization. In both cases, citizens were able to successfully communicate, and learn from that communication, in the presence of diversity and potential disagreement.[85] These capabilities enabled citizens to access and make use of information that they might otherwise have neglected due to social epistemic challenges.

These two components of epistemic civic virtue, a baseline of knowledge and an ability to learn and communicate in the face of diversity, might seem obvious. But, their successful implementation in these cases relies on a third, more interesting, and less obvious, component of epistemic civic virtue. The civic actors in these examples also exhibit a second-order concern with the contributions that they make to improve their epistemic environment. They do not exclusively take action to further first-order political goals, but also invest their time and efforts into improving the environment in which first-order proposals are considered and debated.

To illustrate this third feature, consider another set of activities that these civic actors could have pursued instead: organizing anti-Islamophobia and climate action rallies. Organizing a rally can be a useful means of promoting policy change and may serve as complementary

[85] Danielle Allen (2016) puts forth a related conception of the civic skillset required for diverse political contexts. She distinguishes cosmopolitan bonding skills, which allow us to form bonds with those whom we feel the most affinity, from bridging skills, which allow us to surmount social difference to convert costly social relationships into ones that are mutually beneficial (40). Unlike Allen's conception of bridging skills, however, my conception of epistemic civic virtue does not necessarily require converting social difference to mutual advantage. For example, civic actors may, through their epistemic civic virtue, identify citizens with whom they do not currently share any relevant political goals, and factor that information into their reasoning about the feasibility of their political goals, without thereby committing to a relationship of mutual advantage.

activity to the efforts in these examples. However, such activities may not extend their reach beyond those who are predisposed to agree, when conducted in an unhealthy environment. Instead of directly (or exclusively) engaging in first-order policy debates, the civic actors in these examples help set the stage for more productive political communication going forward (including, perhaps, increased receptivity for first-order persuasion). By putting themselves in a better position to communicate across a social cleavage, Virji and his audience, as well as the Florida climate actors, take the first steps to building a more cohesive communicative environment where citizens with different information and different perspectives can learn, reason, and communicate about their interests, whether shared or divergent.

This sort of concern with the provision and maintenance of healthy background conditions is analogous to a key insight from Elinor Ostrom's (1990) research on how communities address common pool resource problems. In contrast to preexisting paradigms, which suggested that common pool resources such as fisheries and water supplies would be depleted in the absence of private property or state ownership, Ostrom finds that communities of users were able to develop rules and norms of governance to preserve these resources (15). This set of governance norms and rules provides a public good by providing a framework in which to make allocation decisions and settle first-order disputes (52). We might describe the mindset involved in the provision of this governance framework a "social economic" mindset. The type of second-order concern exhibited by Virji and the South Floridians is analogous in that it is concerned with an epistemic public good, the epistemic environment in which first-order discussion and debate takes place, and so seems to involve a "social epistemic" mindset. With this mindset, citizens are driven to make use of their knowledge and skills to combat challenges such as polarization and ethnocentrism, and thereby contribute to the creation or maintenance of

healthier environments in which to learn, reason, and communicate about their interests. Citizens with this mindset, as well as the other components of epistemic civic virtue, contribute to positive externalities for other citizens in a democracy by making it easier for citizens to learn, reason, and communicate about their interests.[86] As a result, epistemic civic virtue can help other citizens become better positioned to advance their interests.

C. Connection to Civic Education

Insofar as the activities pursued by Ayaz Virji and climate actors in Southeast Florida promote civic virtue, they seem to provide a form of civic education in and of themselves. While these locally organized forms of civic engagement are incredibly valuable, they do not have the same reach as formal schooling. So, these efforts might be complimented, and scaled up, by related efforts in the domain of formal schooling, to increase the provision of the relevant kind of civic education beyond those who have antecedently chosen to take part in some form of civic engagement.

Among theorists and practitioners of civic education, there is already some recognition that civic education should be directed at promoting a baseline level of knowledge (upon which to update), which is closely related to the first component of epistemic civic virtue: civic knowledge (Levine 2007, 51; Swan et al. 2013). Furthermore, some scholars of education have called for civic education directed toward exposure to controversial issue discussion, which is

[86] I have focused this discussion on the way that citizens without any formal role or particular obligations can exhibit epistemic civic virtue. However, the same components of epistemic civic virtue also apply to the contributions of those who act as representatives on behalf of others as well, though they take different forms. Consider a formal representative holding office in a legislative assembly. In order to contribute to the creation or maintenance of healthier social epistemic environments, this representative will need civic knowledge in the form of knowledge about their constituents and how to communicate with them. They will also need the capacity to communicate about and learn in the presence of diversity, given that their constituents do not agree, and to advance the interests of their constituents when they are shared with those of other representatives with different views and backgrounds. Finally, a social epistemic mindset will be important, so that they are mindful of the ways in which their advocacy of particular policy choices affect their ability to communicate with their constituents and other representatives in the future. See Chapter 12 of Lupia (2016) for a discussion of how the different political roles that one occupies can affect the information that it is most important for one to know.

closely related to the second component of learning from diversity (Hess 2009). However, not as much attention has been paid to the role that a social epistemic mindset could play. This last component of epistemic civic virtue is especially important because it can lead citizens to create more opportunities to exercise and develop the first two components. For example, citizens with a social epistemic mindset are disposed to identify opportunities to gain relevant civic knowledge and share it with others, perhaps especially when they can expand the diversity of other citizens' sources of information and community of interlocutors.

With a combination, then, of direct civic action along the lines of the examples of Virji and the Florida climate actors, as well as long term efforts to promote civic education in schools directed at these epistemic virtues, citizens could combat the effects of the epistemic challenges we face, and improve the functioning of our democracies, even in the absence of sweeping institutional reforms. So, while civic education in schools is not a silver bullet to improve our social epistemic environment, it can provide an important contribution in concert with other efforts.

III. Promoting Epistemic Civic Virtue Through Civic Education

A. Empirical Evidence About the Effects of Civic Education

The last section ended with the suggestion that civic education efforts could promote the components of epistemic civic virtue that contribute to healthier social epistemic environments. Before proceeding with an exploration of the details of what such efforts might look like, it is worth establishing whether this domain is worthy of our attention. In particular, one might worry about the degree to which the potential impact of civic education via formal schooling is empirically supported. If, for example, we were to lack evidence that civic education has an impact on citizens' political attitudes, beliefs, and behavior, then we might be better off focusing

attention on other facets of democratic life. One major challenge to addressing such concerns, however, is that the measures used in existing, large-sample, quantitative empirical research on civic education often do not correspond to the conception of epistemic civic virtue that I describe above. In light of this challenge, I will proceed as follows: I will first discuss some of the findings from the most prominent quantitative empirical research on civic education and then turn to its limitations as a source for evidence about the degree to which civic education can promote epistemic civic virtue.

One prominent source of evidence about the effects of civic education as part of formal schooling is Richard Niemi and Jane Junn's (2005) analysis of data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment. This test is administered to a nationally representative sample of U.S. High School Seniors and using the data collected from it, Niemi & Junn compare civics test scores while controlling for a range of confounding factors related to students' school and home environments (4). In general, they find that taking civics courses has a positive, statistically significant impact on students' civic knowledge, *as measured in the NAEP Civics Assessment*. They summarize this finding as follows:

> Students who have had no civics classes or who never studied the subject know less about all aspects of government; they are also less able to interpret written and graphic material about political matters. On every one of the NAEP test items, fewer students answered correctly who had taken no civics classes than students with a half-year or more of civics. Indeed, when the latter group is broken down more finely, the group with no civics classes usually lags behind them at every level of course work, even those with only a half-year of work (67).

Furthermore, they find that the curriculum of such courses impacts the magnitude of this effect on students' civic knowledge. For example, they find that courses with frequent discussion of current events are associated with higher levels of political knowledge (122).

Additional empirical research has examined the effects of different classroom practices in civic education and found similar results. One relevant finding is that an "open classroom climate", where students take part in respectful discussion of controversial social and political issues, is associated with increased political knowledge and plans for future political engagement.[87] One example of this research is David Campbell's (2008) analysis of data from CIVED, a 1999 International Education Association civics exam, which was administered to nationally representative samples of 14 year-old students in 28 countries (442). To assess classroom climate, students were asked to respond to prompts, such as "Teachers encourage us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different options" and "Students feel free to express opinion in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students" (443). Campbell constructs a classroom climate index using students' responses to these prompts on a 0-3 scale (from "Never" to "Often"). Furthermore, Campbell addresses concerns about the use of self-report data by using a measure that averages the reports of multiple respondents in the same classroom (443). He finds that more open classroom climates are associated with higher scores on civic knowledge questions, a greater appreciation for political conflict (e.g., believing that political parties which take different positions are good for democracy), and has a higher impact on students with lower socioeconomic statuses, so it may also mitigate gaps in civic empowerment (447-449).

Martens & Gainous (2013) have conducted related research on the effects of different teaching approaches employed by U.S. high school social studies teachers. They test the effects of four different approaches to teaching, including fostering an open classroom climate, on

[87] One important caveat is that recently, publication bias concerns have been raised about education research. For example, Chow & Ekholm (2018) examine a sample of education and special education journals and meta-analyses, and find that published studies tend to have significantly higher effect sizes than unpublished studies. Without further meta-analyses of civic education research that incorporate tests for publication bias, as well as time to examine the effects of changes to research and publication processes, it is difficult to assess to what degree this concern warrants skepticism about this body of evidence.

students' political knowledge, intent to vote, attitudes toward the responsiveness of the government to citizens, and attitudes about students' capacities to influence the government (963). They find that fostering an open classroom climate is the only teaching approach (of the four they tested) positively associated with all four of these outcomes, and that it mediates the effectiveness of other teaching approaches when they are employed together (967; 970). They conclude, "that fostering an open classroom climate is the surest way to improve the democratic capacity of America's youth." (973).

This body of quantitative empirical research provides some evidence that civic education through formal schooling affects citizens' political knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Furthermore, it suggests that a concern for the mere provision of civic education is insufficient; differences in what goes on in the classroom seem to explain some of the differences in the magnitude of these effects. However, the measures used in the research summarized above do not necessarily align with epistemic civic virtue, as I describe it above. The political knowledge measures in this research usually come from national or international standardized civics exams, so they do not feature the kind of local civic knowledge that I identified in the case studies of epistemic civic virtue above. In addition, measures of political attitudes and behavior often focus on students' intent to engage in political activity, such as voting, or their belief in their capacity to have an impact. These attitudinal and behavioral outcomes are distinct from the social epistemic mindset and activities that contribute to healthy social epistemic environments.

Given how political knowledge and political engagement are usually measured, we do not have large-scale empirical research that directly tells us whether civic education can promote epistemic civic virtue. The existing sets of outcome measures reflect civic education assessment's emphasis on certain kinds of information. For example, Niemi & Junn (2005)

review the distribution of content covered in the NAEP exam that they use as the data source for their analysis and find that it is weighted toward the structures and formal processes of government, such as that Congress belongs to the legislative branch or how a bill becomes a law in Congress (33-35). It does not cover issues of contemporary concern such as partisanship in the electorate, affirmative action, and immigration (35-36).[88] In fact, in another piece, Richard Niemi (2012) calls for a shift toward greater coverage of contemporary politics and controversial issues on this basis (33).

In addition to differences in content coverage, there may also be a misalignment between the learning outcomes of civic education assessments and epistemic civic virtue. Assessments like the NAEP tend to focus on discrete facts and basic inferences, but my conception of epistemic civic virtue includes the capacity to learn and communicate in the face of diversity, which cannot be easily captured through tests of discrete facts. While not focused on epistemic capacities, other scholars have noted this relative lack of emphasis on skill development. For example, Peter Levine (2012) calls for an increased focus on the development of civic skills in civic education efforts with appeal to the decline of other venues of engagement in civil society. He notes that "civic skills must be intentionally taught to each generation because many of the most effective techniques are counterintuitive" and adds that schools must provide students with the opportunity to practice civic skills, as other domains of civil society to develop them have declined (42). Without greater large-scale efforts to directly teach civic skills and subsequently, to include them in state and national assessments, it will be hard to reach a definitive conclusion about civic education's ability to promote the diversity-related-capacity component of epistemic civic virtue.

[88] Other researchers have found a similar lack of coverage of contemporary and controversial issues in U.S. civics textbooks (Stroup & Garriott 1997; Wallace & Allen 2008; Menefee-Libey 2015).

B. Empirical Evidence Related to the Promotion of Epistemic Civic Virtue

This misalignment between epistemic civic virtue and the current foci of civic education assessments makes it difficult to use large-sample, quantitative empirical research to directly determine to what degree civic education can promote epistemic civic virtue. Despite this difficulty, some of the aforementioned research does bear on this question. First, recall the evidence that an open classroom climate promotes political knowledge as measured in traditional forms of civic assessment. Students in open classroom climates are exposed to respectful discussion of current events and controversial issues, and this experience is associated with both greater political knowledge and appreciation for political conflict. Both of these outcomes provide some reason to expect these students to also develop some capacity to learn and communicate in the presence of (at least some) forms of diversity.

Second, we do have some evidence, in the form of case studies and qualitative observation, to suggest that civic education can promote components of epistemic civic virtue. Consider McAvoy & Hess' (2013) observations of a Midwestern high school's legislative simulation program.[89] The program runs over the course of many weeks and uses a scaffolded structure to help students build up the skills to deliberate issues in formally structured legislative committees and pass mock legislation (22-23). This program enables students to learn about and discuss current topics of concern in their community, such as immigration, in an area that has recently shifted from "being almost entirely White and working class to being home to a large Hispanic population" (22). McAvoy & Hess describe the success of this program as follows: "Adams High is able to do what no other school in our study was able to do—create a deliberative climate in the school. They do this by designing an inclusive, mandatory activity that

[89] For additional reports of observations of controversial issue discussion in U.S. high schools, see Hess (2009) and McAvoy & Hess (2015).

engages all students (not just those in honor classes) in high-level policy discussions, that move from the classroom to the hallways, the volleyball bus, and the dinner table" (23).

This program, in this context, seems to be conducive to the development of the three main components of epistemic civic virtue. The simulation is designed to promote civic knowledge and the capacity to learn and communicate in the face of diversity. McAvoy & Hess (2013) describe how teachers scaffold the curriculum so that students can develop the skills to engage in discussion over time, without assuming they have the requisite skills or content knowledge at the outset (23). Finally, by having students run their own legislative processes, they might start to see how their contributions to discussion and debate impact their environment. McAvoy & Hess report that teachers recognize the importance of creating the right environment for discussion of controversial issues. One teacher stated the following, in response to concerns about the program from other schools: "if you don't do it in a safe, structured environment here, they are still doing it at the lunch table. They are still doing it. And if people are still talking about it . . . this at least gives them an appropriate context and a structure with which to sort of deal with some of those charged issues and maybe get an understanding of both sides of the issue" (24-25). So, by demonstrating the importance of communication in healthier environments, the program may also serve to promote a social epistemic mindset.

In addition to observations and case studies of course activities, there is also some research in political and social psychology that bears on civic education's ability to promote epistemic civic virtue. For example, Diana Mutz (2006) has conducted research on the effects of crosscutting political contact. She finds that such exposure is associated with political learning, measured by the ability to report rationales for political positions that are not one's own (63; 74). In addition, she also finds that such exposure is associated with increased political tolerance,

measured in terms of a willingness to support civil liberties for those with whom one disagrees (77-78).[90] Civic education provides an opportunity for this kind of contact because schools can reflect a wider variety of views than students are exposed to at home. Even in seemingly homogenous classrooms, teachers can uncover forms of diversity in the classroom and leverage them for political learning (Hess 2009).

Relatedly, there is a long-standing research program in social psychology on the effects of intergroup contact. Starting with the research of Gordon Allport (1954), psychologists have found that contact with members of other groups tends to promote attitude change toward out-group members (often understood in terms of the reduction of prejudice), especially under particular conditions, such as equal group status in the situation and common goals.[91] Research on exposure to racial diversity in higher education has found that such exposure, both in classroom settings, but especially in informal settings, promotes attitude change and learning about out-group members (Gurin et al. 2002; Gurin et al. 2004). While promoting epistemic civic virtue does not necessarily involve attitude change, it does suggest an epistemic impact as well, insofar as attitude change tends to be accompanied with changes in beliefs and information. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis evaluating the processes through which intergroup contact reduces prejudice, Pettigrew & Tropp (2008) identify the capacity to take the perspective of out-

[90] One potential challenge that needs to be managed is the possibility of a tradeoff between political participation, which can be encouraged by homogenous political networks, and crosscutting contact, which can promote learning, but decrease political participation, perhaps due to the increased ambivalence that results from exposure to disagreement. Diana Mutz (2006) finds evidence of this tradeoff in her research on cross-cutting political contact (96-105). One further complication, though, is that it might be that the presence of this tradeoff is highly context dependent. For example, Quintelier, Stolle, and Harell (2012) examine the effects of political network diversity on political participation in Belgium and find a positive relationship, which might suggest that national political contexts mediate the relationship between crosscutting contact and participation. In addition, Jang (2009) finds that for politically alienated individuals, crosscutting contact promotes political participation in the form of voter turnout.

[91] See Pettigrew (1998), Pettigrew & Tropp (2006), and Dovidio et al. (2017) for overviews of research on intergroup contact. Allport initially identified four conditions for intergroup contact to reduce prejudice, which are: equal status between the groups in the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities, law, or custom. However, Pettigrew & Tropp's 2006 meta-analysis finds that intergroup contact promotes attitude change even in the absence of the initial conditions identified by Allport, but that those conditions "act as facilitating conditions that enhance the tendency for positive contact outcomes to emerge" (766).

group members and empathize with their concerns as an especially robust mediator of the contact-prejudice relationship (923; 927). This capacity is epistemic, as it involves insights into the perspectives of one's fellow citizens and is closely aligned with the capacity to learn and communicate in the presence of diversity, which is a core component of epistemic civic virtue.

More generally, this research on the effects of exposure to political and racial diversity suggests a particular kind of experience that would be conducive to the promotion of epistemic civic virtue, which civic education could provide. Civic education could be structured so as to prepare students to create and maintain healthier spaces for political learning and communication by providing students with curated opportunities to do so within the classroom.

IV. Civic Education as Civic Exchange

On the basis of the aforementioned forms of evidence, I now suggest a framework for civic education efforts designed to promote epistemic civic virtue. This framework appeals to what I call the "civic exchange" function of civic education, which we can contrast with the "value promotion" function of civic education. I will start by explaining the value promotion function, as it is the focus of most debates about civic education, before explaining the civic exchange function and how these two functions differ.

A. The Value Promotion Function of Civic Education

As I discussed in Section I above, public good justifications of civic education often appeal to the way that civic education can prepare citizens to realize or sustain particular political values. For example, civic education might prepare citizens to become politically engaged to make democracy more just, or it might demonstrate to citizens how liberal institutions embody the value of toleration, and why that value is important.[92] When civic education serves these

[92] Those who argue that civic education can promote positive features of democracy through political participation include Levine (2007), who argues in favor of promoting broad political participation to advance equity in politics and civil society (22-

aims, it is carrying out a value-promotion function. This function is the focus of debates about civic education as theorists argue about which (political) values, or particular balance of values, should be promoted through civic education, and how a commitment to these values should influence decisions about the relationship between parents, students, schools, and the state.

One example of the way in which the value promotion function can serve as the focus of civic education debates is the distinction between civic republican and liberal pluralist accounts of civic education. The former emphasize the importance of citizens' political participation in promoting the common good, while the latter emphasize the costs of political participation and orientation toward the common good with respect to individual and community freedoms (Berner 2017, 34). [93] These different value commitments lead to different conceptions of the political engagement that citizens should be prepared for, as well as different views about the proper relationship between students, parents, and the state. Gutmann (1987), a civic republican, argues that students should be prepared to engage in deliberation about different ways of life, including those different from their parents. However, Galston (1991), a liberal pluralist, argues that this view is too demanding, as liberal freedom includes the right to live an unexamined life, so the state need not take an interest in how children think about different ways of life (253-254). Instead, he argues that civic education should focus on preparing citizens to evaluate representatives based on their performance (247). As this example illustrates, debates about civic education's value promotion function focus on (as one might expect) the values that should be

24), and Levinson (2012a), who argues that inequalities of civic engagement in the U.S. hinder the quality, stability, and legitimacy of democracy (48). Those who are argue that civic education can promote positive features of liberalism include Macedo (2000), who argues that liberal democracy relies on commitments to shared values such as tolerance and respect (134), and Galston (1991), who argues that liberalism is committed to a distinctive view of justice and the human good, and that communities need to promote particular liberal virtues to sustain the institutions that realize these ends (18-19).

[93] There are different variations on this distinction among civic education theorists. For example, Peter Levine (2007) distinguishes the classical liberal view of political participation, which sees it as a burden to minimize, with the civic republican view of political participation, which sees it as intrinsically valuable (37). Similarly, Eamonn Callan (1997) distinguishes a fundamental commitment to autonomy and a fundamental commitment to participation in collective self-rule, where the former roughly emphasizes liberalism and the latter roughly emphasizes democracy (10-11).

promoted by civic education, and how students should be prepared to realize those values as future civic actors.

B. The Civic Exchange Function of Civic Education

Civic education theorists also formulate arguments that appeal to another function of civic education, which is separable from the value promotion function. This is the civic exchange function of civic education, whereby civic education enables citizens to learn about the views and traditions of other citizens, and prepares them to effectively communicate with citizens with different perspectives and backgrounds. The legislative simulation program described by McAvoy & Hess (2013), discussed above, carries out a civic exchange function by teaching students about different local experiences related to issues like immigration, as well as national partisan perspectives through the simulation of the legislative process. As part of this program, students have the opportunity to practice communicating in the presence of different forms of diversity and disagreement, while acquiring knowledge about different groups and their perspectives.

Many classrooms and school districts in the U.S. are relatively homogenous such that the overwhelming majority of citizens share the same political views, have similar background experiences, similar religious commitments, and similar ethnic or racial identities. Given the potential civic benefits of crosscutting and intergroup contact, an especially ambitious form of civic exchange could be carried out with programs that involve interaction between students in different jurisdictions. There are some prominent examples of such programs in higher education. For example, the University of Pennsylvania, an elite liberal arts college in Philadelphia, and Cairn University, an Evangelical university in nearby Langhorne, PA, hosted a series of political discussion forums in 2017, following concerns about limited cross-cutting

political contact following the 2016 U.S. presidential election (Brown 2017; Zimmerman 2017). The forums started with a moderated panel featuring students from both universities, followed by discussion in breakout groups (Hageman 2017). These forums were not without shortcomings, but they provide another example of how civic education can perform a civic exchange function: in this case, by creating an infrastructure for students to communicate across educational jurisdictions.[94]

Educators can also work to leverage the forms of diversity that are present in their classrooms, even in seemingly homogenous communities, in order to help students to develop epistemic civic virtue, and prepare for interactions in more diverse groups in other contexts. For example, Diana Hess (2009) describes efforts by individual teachers in seemingly politically homogenous classrooms to uncover diversity among the student body, and also increase exposure to diverse views through curriculum choices. Here is one illustrative description:

> Mr. Kushner recognized that even though the students in his class were generally left leaning and remarkably similar on some issues, in reality there was both intra- (that is, individual students were left wing on some issues, undecided on others, and right wing on others) and inter- (across the class) diversity. Consequently, he went to great lengths to bring diversity of opinion into the class that did not exist naturally. He did this by ensuring that students were reading high-quality resources on various perspectives of the issues, inviting guest speakers to class to voice views that were radically different from what the vast majority of students believed, and using specific discussion methods that requires students to analyze multiple positions – even those they did not initially support. For example, he frequently used Structured Academic Controversy, a form of small group discussion that requires students to prepare for and advocate two sides of policy issues, and moot court simulations in which the students rarely were able to select which "side" they wanted to support. (87).

[94] For example, one student attendee reported dissatisfaction with some of the events' focus on civility, stating: "[w]hen you are willing to be emotional in a way that may come across as 'uncivil,' you are able to take a political conversation to a deeper and more honest place, and I don't think we were able to do that" (Snyder 2017). Furthermore, attendees reported some disappointment in the racial diversity of one of the forums, while attendees at another forum lamented the relatively low number of students who spoke in favor of Trump (Brown 2017; Snyder 2017). Furthermore, these events might have also taken advantage of the fact that the participating universities were in the same geographic area by including discussion of state and local issues. These limitations might be evidence of the limitations of one-off events rather than sustained engagement over time.

Despite the broad political consensus among students, the teacher in this example makes efforts to expose students to perspectives that they are less likely to be exposed to, through the structure of discussions, the use of guest speakers, and a diversity of content in the curriculum. Furthermore, by making the diversity that is present in the classroom more visible, and making it an object of discussion, students have the opportunity to practice incorporating perspectives that they do not share into their political reasoning.

Another important component of the civic exchange function of civic education involves exposing students to the predominant forms of civic education and content foci in other communities. Meira Levinson (2012a) provides a useful example of such an exchange in her discussion of the differences between predominant historical narratives shared by social identity group communities. Levinson discusses the prominence of a "moderate triumphalist" historical narrative of the U.S. as a nation founded admirable ideals, such as freedom and equality, which are tempered in practice, but which the nation continually strives to realize more fully (111-112). We can contrast this moderately triumphalist narrative with a counter-narrative that is prominent in some black American institutions like HBCUs: "American history as a story of ongoing struggle against inherent oppression and injustice, accompanied by an obligation to use one's opportunities to continue the struggle through civic and political engagement (116). Levinson notes the danger of a situation where privileged and white students are only exposed to the triumphalist narrative, while not privileged and not white students are exposed to the counternarrative. In these circumstances, interactions between citizens from different groups may result in misunderstanding and resentment (128-129). Civic education that exposes students to different narratives about U.S. history, and prepares them to seriously engage with those find

different narratives compelling, carries out the civic exchange function, and can build up epistemic civic virtue, while mitigating the risk of misunderstanding and resentment.[95]

C. How Value Promotion and Civic Exchange Can Come Apart

It might seem that civic exchange is just one form that value promotion can take, whereby those most committed to the pursuit of a common good will support civic exchange, and those more concerned with preserving liberal or community freedoms, given the burdens of political participation, will push for fewer exchange efforts. However, this conclusion about the relevant sets of normative views and institutional possibilities is premature. In fact, the amount and form of civic exchange conducted through civic education is relatively orthogonal to the amount and form of value promotion conducted through civic education.

Let me illustrate why this is the case using two views of education that are fairly radical, compared to existing educational practices in the U.S. The first view is Paulo Freire's (1970) view of education, which is focused on developing critical consciousness and liberation from oppression. Freire criticizes traditional approaches to education, which treat students as receptacles to fill with information (72). Instead, his model aims, ultimately, to establish a form of dialogue among the oppressed about their current conditions (65). This dialogue is to be paired with action to combat oppression so that action and reflection form a sort of feedback loop, which Freire refers to as praxis (66). This approach aims to cultivate a critical consciousness, whereby participants gain a collective awareness of their oppression, its causes,

[95] As with the possibility of communication across educational jurisdictions, there are important feasibility constraints to consider. Students need to be taught the component skills to productively discuss the diversity and disagreement in their midst. In some contexts, perhaps when tensions about a particular form of difference are especially high and students are not equipped to manage these tensions, discussion of those forms of difference might not be appropriate at that point of time. For this reason, administrators and teachers need to be mindful of what forms of civic exchange will be most conducive to learning and communication in their particular context.

their previous conceptions of their situation, and how to act to combat their oppression (107-109).

One feature that stands out from Freire's view of education is the importance of collective action toward a particular goal: liberation from oppression. For a very different perspective in this regard, consider Ashley Rogers Berner's (2017) educational pluralism. Berner argues in favor of an educational pluralism whereby "state governments fund and hold accountable a wide variety of schools, including religious ones, but do not necessarily operate them" (3). Implementing this proposal would involve encouraging the development of a greater variety of schooling options through mechanisms like charter schools, school vouchers, and tax credits, which would enable students to attend schools with distinctive educational philosophies, including particular religious, political, and ethical commitments (20-22; 53). Under these circumstances, schools would be oriented toward very different goals, though with some shared regulation and standards (145).

These two views differ sharply with respect to the value promotion function of civic education. Where Freire might see an educational commitment to promoting critical consciousness, Berner might see the threat of indoctrination, and where Berner might see an education justifiably based on a particular community's distinctive viewpoint, Freire might see the threat of false consciousness and maintenance of oppression. However, these particular value promotion commitments do not necessarily lead to a particular provision of civic exchange practices. Berner's educational pluralism could be realized without any contact and learning between schools, but we could also realize pluralism with mechanisms for crosscutting contact across different schools and communities, and with provisions for exchange-based learning. Similarly, we can promote Freirean critical consciousness in ways that are very localized, such

that particular communities focus on the particular oppression they face, or we can imagine a great degree of exchange of liberatory insights and activities across communities in different oppressive circumstances. As this comparison demonstrates, even when we have settled on a particular commitment to the value promotion function of civic education, there can still be a great deal of variation in the civic exchange function of civic education.

One reason that civic exchange is often not separated out, as a distinct axis of difference between approaches to civic education, might be that some theorists appeal to this civic exchange function as instrumentally valuable to the value promotion function. For example, Eamonn Callan (1997) argues that exposure to ethical diversity is required for citizens to avoid ethical servility, which involves an adequate level of autonomous development (190). Common schools, which bring citizens of different backgrounds together, can serve to expose students to different ethical views, and teach them to charitably interpret, as well as responsibly criticize, other views (133). Callan adopts a view about how the civic exchange function of civic education should be deployed by appealing to the way that civic education can be used to teach citizens about others' views, and arguing for a particular provision of such exposure. However, he does so in service of a particular understanding of the liberal commitment to autonomy, such that the exchange function is used in service of the value promotion function.[96]

While Callan sees civic exchange instrumentally valuable for a particular value commitment, there is room for variation in the pairing of these two functions of civic education. One way this might occur is by preserving the value promotion commitment of a minimal form of autonomy, but softening Callan's commitment to common schools. Elmer Thiessen (1993)

[96] Callan's (1997) main argument appeals to ethical servility, rather than autonomy, because he worries that autonomy arguments do not demonstrate how to weight the autonomy of parents and children when they conflict (149-151). By appealing to the need to avoid ethical servility, Callan intends to avoid this challenge because parents cannot veto this need for their children (152).

shares Callan's commitment to a minimal form of autonomy, but argues that it can be promoted in the context of schools committed to Christian nurture, which may not serve as common schools. Thiessen defines Christian nurture as "the initiation of a person (a child or an adult) into a Christian heritage, an inheritance of Christian sentiments, beliefs, imaginings, understandings, and activities", and he argues that schools should play in a role in this process (for Christian students), along with the promotion of capacities like autonomy (27). One argument he offers appeals to the psychological benefits of stability and coherence for children, which can be promoted by a continuity between family religious life and schools without threatening autonomy (270). On this basis, Thiessen might defend different forms of civic exchange or different means of promoting autonomy, while preserving Callan's commitment to a minimal form of autonomy.

Importantly, for my purposes, one can commit to particular components of civic exchange without committing to a particular value promotion function of civic exchange. Those with different views about the value promotion function of civic educations can still accept my rationale that civic education can produce social epistemic benefits, by promoting epistemic civic virtue. Consider my claim, defended above, that epistemic civic virtue contributes to the creation and maintenance of healthier social epistemic environments. Citizens with very different views can benefit from such contributions, as they can end up in a better position to learn and reason about their interests, and to advance those interests by working with others. This improvement would be of interest to those committed to Freire's conception of liberation, as they would be in a better position to correct mistaken beliefs about the causes of oppression and better positioned to communicate with others who are similarly situated. However, this improvement would also be of interest to those with very different value promotion perspectives, such as those concerned

with Christian nurture. Citizens who wish to promote Christian nurture can benefit from the presence of other citizens who understand their perspective (even when they do not share it), and are able to take civic action with them or incorporate the Christian nurture perspective into their reasoning about what is politically feasible, even if those other citizens disagree with them with regard to some policy questions.

To generalize from these examples, we can summarize the multi-perspective appeal of the social epistemic benefits of civic exchange with reference to two intended outcomes. The first outcome is an improved set of circumstances for one's own political reasoning. A given citizen, *a,* can benefit from increased access to sources of information and perspectives that would otherwise be more challenging to incorporate into their reasoning. This increased accessibility can put *a* in a better position to understand their own political goals and values, and how they relate to policy options. In addition, *a* would be in a better position to identify others with whom they share goals or interests, and factor in feasibility constraints that result from disagreement and conflicting interests. The second outcome is an improvement in the extent to which *other* citizens are equipped to be responsive to *a*'s perspective. Insofar as other citizens benefit from the first outcome, they can develop a better understanding of *a*'s interests and goals, and *better* reason from *a*'s perspective, which in turn can facilitate better communication and collaboration with *a*. Since *a* can interact with other citizens that understand *a*'s perspective, *a* can end up better positioned to advance their interests.

It may not be possible to acknowledge the benefits of epistemic civic virtue from every possible perspective on value promotion, but it does exhibit a high degree of convergence among those who disagree about particular questions in the political and educational domain. In light of this convergence, increasing the emphasis on the civic exchange function of civic education can

serve as a path to promoting epistemic civic virtue, without tying the justification of these efforts to a particular perspective on the value promotion function of education.

D. Civic Exchange and Civic Education Curricula

Adopting this approach to civic education has some important implications for the development of civic education curricula. First, emphasizing the civic exchange function of civic education will require de-emphasizing some forms of content knowledge that are not as conducive to the promotion of epistemic civic virtue. In particular, some civic education initiatives emphasize, and test for, recall of discrete facts related to the U.S. Constitution and American political history. Examples of this conception include standardized civics assessments such as the NAEP and initiatives like the Joe Foss Institute's Civic Education Initiative.[97] The latter is an initiative to implement the U.S. Citizenship Test as a requirement for high school graduation with the goal of preparing students to become engaged and informed citizens. While this knowledge can be useful, if it is not paired with an emphasis on civic exchange, it will fail to promote epistemic civic virtue, and thereby leave students ill equipped to reason and communicate in a social environment characterized by challenges such as polarization and ethnocentrism. More generally, civic education efforts with too narrow of a focus on discrete constitutional and historical facts do not target the core epistemic challenges faced by contemporary citizens, which go beyond a lack of constitutional and historical knowledge.

Instead of the content emphasized in the U.S. Citizenship Test, civic education efforts that focus on simulated or actual civic action are especially conducive to civic exchange. One useful example of a curriculum that emphasizes this kind of content is Generation Citizen's action civics approach (Millenson, Mills, and Andes 2014). Action civics focuses on civic skills

[97] For more on the Civic Education Initiative, see its website: http://civicseducationinitiative.org/.

that will prepare students to take action on whatever issues they care about with an emphasis on local community action (1-2). As part of this curriculum, students participate in a series of activities where they identify relevant issues to their community, gather and examine evidence to identify root causes of these issues, formulate goals, identify influencers and decision-makers, and form coalitions to make progress toward their goals. Students often work in small groups to accomplish tasks to move along this progression and as long as the small groups are not too homogenous in the dimensions most relevant to their issues of interest, this presents an opportunity for exchange that can foster epistemic civic virtue. As an example, consider the following small group guidelines distributed to students:

> When in a small group, your job is to:
> • have the attitude of "I want to learn" and "I want to teach others";
> • use your curiosity to make connections between new and old learning;
> participate for the sake of your own learning—not just to perform for a grade;
> • care about the learning of everyone else (Millenson, Mills, and Andes 2014, 25)

This activity makes the interdependence of the students' learning explicit, and leads students to consider how their contributions to the first order task of identifying a root cause also contributes to the learning of others, which presents a good opportunity to cultivate a social epistemic mindset. Furthermore, there are built-in incentives for students to take others' learning into consideration, as some small group activities involve each student taking on a specialized role, while others involve collective decision-making through consensus-building and voting (34; 40; 42).[98]

While Generation Citizen's action civics curriculum is especially conducive to civic exchange and the development of epistemic civic virtue, it does present some challenges that are

[98] It might be especially useful to include activities that introduce students both to consensus-building forms of decision-making and various non-consensus voting procedures. As Jane Mansbridge (1983) argues, both unitary democracy, which emphasizes consensus and shared interests, and adversary democracy, which emphasizes majority rule and conflicting interests, can be appropriate in different contexts (252-268). On this basis, it is valuable to prepare students to communicate in and reason about contexts where unitary and adversarial forms of democracy are instantiated.

worth considering. First, the action civics curriculum includes a strong emphasis on local issues. There are some good reasons for this emphasis: local issues might be more tractable, students might have useful local knowledge bearing on local issues, and local issues might not activate national partisan attitudes. However, a concern for civic exchange would recommend pairing this local emphasis with some consideration of perspectives from other communities (nationally or internationally). This will be especially important in communities that are relatively homogenous with regard to key cleavages in contemporary politics, such as partisan, ethnoracial, religious, and class identities. Such exposure should better prepare students to transfer the civic knowledge, skills, and mindset from their civics classroom to other contexts they encounter, which extend beyond their local environment.

In addition, the action civics curriculum emphasizes activities that are largely conducted within existing political mechanisms, such as advocacy directed at local decision-makers like public officials. Again, there are good reasons for this emphasis, as the existing political infrastructure often will provide the promising means of taking civic action, and an understanding of how to work within it can also be useful for evaluating proposals for reform. However, it would also be useful to include some exposure to perspectives that are skeptical or distrustful of the existing political system, as citizens with those perspectives can also make important contributions to the social epistemic environment and can influence which policy proposals will be most feasible.

Generation Citizen's action civics provides an especially promising approach to civic education from the perspective of civic exchange, but the promotion of epistemic civic virtue also requires reaching citizens in environments that are less conducive to civic exchange. One especially challenging set of circumstances that has been a source of discussion in prior debates

about civic education involve citizens with religious concerns about learning about perspectives that are not their own. I will take up these concerns in more detail in the next section, but for now, I want to note that the civic exchange function of civic education can be carried out in circumstances where religious concerns are especially salient.

One useful set of examples can be found in Feinberg & Layton's (2014) research on religion courses in public schools in the U.S. These courses have become more common in some jurisdictions where many, often evangelical Christian, students have increasingly left public schools in favor of home or private schooling, and as a result of advocacy from religious political groups. These courses can serve as a response to draw more religious students back into public schools or at least mitigate distrust of public school culture (15; 19; 58; 69).[99] Among the rationales that Feinberg & Layton offer in defense of religion courses in public high schools is an appeal to the importance of an understanding of the role of religion in other citizens' lives, which is an example of the civic exchange function of civic education: "[a]t a time when different religions are playing such an important role in civic life throughout the world, citizenship and informed public participation require a greater understanding of the role religion plays in people's lives. As part of its unique mission, public schools have a responsibility to provide this understanding" (4).

Feinberg & Layton discuss four different kinds of religion courses on offer in different public schools. Bible history courses, which seem to have student recall and understanding of the sequence of events described in the Bible as the primary learning goal, are perhaps the least conducive to civic exchange (32). One reason is that a focus on the chronology of the Bible,

[99] The emphasis on drawing students back to public schools is a contingent feature of this example, but recall that civic exchange can also be pursued in an environment where private schools are predominant, as in Berner's (2017) educational pluralism framework. Civic exchange could be pursued in this case through civic education that leverages the diversity within these schools and creates opportunities for crosscutting learning across schools with different educational philosophies.

understood as a linear sequence of events, can block discussion that can facilitate learning and exposure to diversity. This emphasis can serve to crowd out discussion of moral evaluation of the figures in the Bible or discussion of different hermeneutical approaches to the same text (34-36; 47). While part of the civic rationale that Feinberg & Layton offer for this approach is the recognition of community values (when the courses are taught in conservative Christian communities), there is a serious danger of re-enforcing those values in a way that marginalizes other perspectives, and re-enforces social epistemic challenges by inhibiting exposure to other perspectives.[100]

A closely related form that religion courses take can be captured under the header of "The Bible and its Influence." Feinberg & Layton summarize these courses as focusing on "the various uses of the Bible instead of attempting either to recover the original meaning of the biblical text or to reconstruct the events toward which that text might point" (58). They note that while some curricula that fall under this header avoid exposure to diverse perspectives on the Bible, others include discussion of African American and Jewish readings of the text, which are marginalized in some contexts (69-73). By expanding the scope of religion courses beyond the construction of the chronology of the events described in the Bible, The Bible and its Influence courses include a wider array of possibilities for civic exchange and the development of epistemic civic virtue. In addition to the opportunity to learn about and practice communicating in the presence of diversity internal to the Judeo-Christian tradition, these courses could also include discussion of the interaction between Biblical traditions and other religious traditions, insofar as this is another form of the Bible's influence. Furthermore, these courses provide the

[100] Feinberg & Layton (2014) describe a very closely related concern based on their observations of Bible history courses. They caution that these courses can emphasize recognition of the prevailing community's view while promoting *misrecognition* of minority perspectives (53).

opportunity to discuss the conditions for the creation and maintenance of communication between diverse faith communities.

However, by focusing on the Bible, these courses do still run the risk of re-enforcing dominant community perspectives, especially in the most homogenous classrooms and communities. Courses on world religions offer an especially promising approach to address this risk. In addition to exposure to diversity within *and between* religions, these courses also offer a greater range of opportunities for inter-group contact and the introduction of resources outside of the classroom. Feinberg & Layton describe how the "strange is made familiar through field trips, interviews with religious leaders and invited speakers, and of course through lectures, art, and music. Teachers encourage students to seek out and listen to firsthand accounts of different religion by congregants and religious leaders themselves" (112). For these reasons, world religions courses offer the widest range of opportunities for civic exchange within the domain of coursework on religion.

It is worth noting, though, that the introduction of world religion courses will not be advisable in every context. In some communities, shifting from Bible history courses to world religions courses might exacerbate families' flight of public schools toward home and faith-based education without some other mechanism for civic exchange.[101] In especially homogenous classrooms, many students may be quick to dismiss many of the perspectives they are exposed to, and become defensive of their own, which could make this approach to civic education counter-productive. As a result, the risks of limiting the provision of civic education and of the

[101] While the examples of religion courses from Feinberg & Layton (2014) skew toward conservative faith communities, curriculum changes in service of civic exchange can also be pursued in progressive or left-wing religious contexts. For example, the Freirean approach to education has been influential on the Liberation Theology tradition within Christianity (see McLaren & Jabric 2018 for a discussion of the relationship between Liberation Theology and Freirean Critical Pedagogy). In courses where this perspective on Christianity is emphasized, those pursuing civic exchange might include discussion of liberatory traditions in other religions, such as in Islam, as well as perspectives on religion with very different political implications, and those who see their religious commitments as orthogonal to their political commitments.

retrenchment of social cleavages need to be weighed with respect to the range of opportunities for civic exchange offered by these courses. However, in general, it can be useful for administrators with influence over curriculum decisions to push toward courses in the Bible and its Influence form, rather than Bible history, and toward world religion courses in more promising contexts. In addition, they can create opportunities for communication between teacher and students working within these different frameworks for additional opportunities for civic exchange. Insofar as teachers have the freedom to shape how the curriculum is presented through their pedagogical choices, they can make efforts to make any of these approaches more conducive to civic exchange.

V. Social Engineering and Indoctrination Concerns

As the above discussion of the civic potential of religion courses in U.S. high schools demonstrates, promoting the civic exchange function of civic education will be controversial. In this section, I will present a pair of objections, which bear on the feasibility of civic education proposals.

Civic education proposals in the U.S., stretching back to the 18th and 19th centuries, have faced concerns about the burdens they could impose on citizens. One prominent example is the disagreement between Noah Webster, who saw formal schooling as a means of accomplishing large-scale social goals, and Thomas Jefferson, who worried about such proposals and appealed to the need for informed citizens to protect their rights from intrusions from the state (Ravitch 2001, 16-17). Diane Ravitch (2001) describes this sort of concern with Webster's view in terms of social engineering: "one sees the beginnings of an ideology that saw students as instruments who could be formed to serve the purposes of the state. This is the root of social engineering" (26). Civic education that serves as social engineering would seem to impose serious costs on

citizens, by treating them as tools of the state, without consideration of their own interests. This result would threaten the public good justification for civic education efforts, as the costs imposed on citizens may outweigh the positive externalities to which such justifications appeal.

Indoctrination concerns are another common, and closely related concern, in debates about (civic) education. Philosophers of education tend to understand indoctrination in terms of the promotion of vicious epistemic habits among students. Snook (1972) defends an early, influential account whereby indoctrination involves teaching with the intention that the learner believes some proposition regardless of the evidence (47). In this case, believing a proposition independently of the evidence one has for it constitutes an epistemic vice, which can threaten learners' agential capacities, but would also threaten the social epistemic public goods of concern in this paper. More recent philosophical accounts of indoctrination in education have strayed away from intent as a necessary condition, but have preserved a concern with epistemic vice. Consider the debate between Callan & Arena (2009) and Siegel (2017) about the nature of indoctrination. Callan & Arena argue that the fundamental feature of indoctrination is that it promotes close-minded belief, whereby the learner is unable or unwilling to give due weight to the reasons that bear on a proposition because of an excessive emotional attachment to its truth (111). By contrast, Siegel argues that non-evidential belief is sufficient for indoctrination and does not require close-mindedness (115-117). Both sides of this debate agree that indoctrination involves the promotion of epistemic vices such that learners are not able to properly relate their beliefs to the relevant evidence, though they disagree about the particulars of the vices in question.

One way that indoctrination, understood in this fashion, can relate to social engineering concerns is that education practices that run the risk of indoctrination can serve as a means of

social engineering. If citizens adopt epistemic vices so that they cannot properly reason about evidence, they become less likely to notice or take action against policy initiatives that run counter to their interests. Understood in this way, however, social engineering and indoctrination objections to the promotion of epistemic civic virtue through civic exchange do not seem especially pressing. Part of my rationale for civic education is that promoting epistemic civic virtue will improve the social epistemic environment in which citizens operate, which in turn will enhance citizens' capacities to advance their interests through their political engagement. Furthermore, promoting the civic exchange function of civic education should guard against the threat of indoctrination, as citizens will have access to a wider range of potential evidence, and ways of interpreting that evidence, through greater exposure to different political and educational perspectives.

Despite these features of my account, some citizens will, in fact, see civic education efforts designed to promote epistemic civic virtue as containing the threat of social engineering and indoctrination. Whether or not they are correct in this assessment, the perception of social engineering and indoctrination does pose an important challenge to my approach because it may limit its feasibility. The provision of the social epistemic public good in questions depends on citizens developing and deploying epistemic civic virtue to promote healthier spaces for learning and communication, while mitigating the effects of challenges such as polarization and ethnocentrism. However, if citizens perceive these efforts as attempts at social engineering or indoctrination, then they may oppose civic education efforts and opt out of them. As a result, the provision of civic education may become limited, which will limit the positive externalities it can create, and may actually reinforce existing social epistemic challenges.

To illustrate this point, consider an analogy to tax compliance. States use taxes to fund the provision of public goods such as national defense and transportation infrastructure. If a small number of citizens opt out of paying their taxes, perhaps because they perceive the state's pursuit of these goods as contrary to their interests, this may not have much of an effect on the state's capacity to sustain national defense and transportation infrastructure. However, as the number of citizens who opt out of paying taxes grows, the tax revenue of the state declines, and as a result, the quality of national defense and transportation infrastructure would decline as well. The same kind of process applies to the provision of civic education. Small groups of citizens may opt out of civic education without much of an effect on the social epistemic environment in a democracy, and there might be good reason to accommodate those who see their interests as largely orthogonal to the existing political infrastructure.[102] Yet as the number of citizens who opt out of civic education grows, and if these citizens take part in political life, the broader health of the social epistemic environment will suffer.

Furthermore, the presence of social epistemic challenges, such as polarization, makes the perception of social engineering and indoctrination especially likely. For example, Levinson & Reid (2019) argue that in a partisan landscape, it is unreasonable to expect educators, who seek to create open classroom and school climates, to avoid taking partisan stands in the classroom (90). There are two main components of this challenge. First, in an environment where partisanship is high, the set of issues and content that are considered settled or non-controversial is highly unstable. As a result, what can be treated as an appropriate political controversy is itself subject to partisan judgment (97). This component might extend to the civic exchange function

[102] One candidate for such accommodation in the U.S. is the Amish community. Given their religious commitments, Amish citizens have opposed compulsory high school education, as in the Supreme Court case *Wisconsin v. Yoder*. These same religious commitments also lead the Amish to largely avoid political engagement (Yoder 1993). So, it might be the case that Amish citizens can best advance their interests by opting out of both civic education and political participation, which should not threaten the health of the social epistemic environment.

of civic education because partisan citizens might reject exposure to certain perspectives, or to reasoning that takes other citizens' perspectives intro account, as a threat of indoctrination because it might disrupt citizens' existing evidential connection to their favored perspectives.[103] In addition, given the presence of partisan entrenchment, members of (e.g., ethnoracial or religious) minority groups might worry that civic exchange practices will impose burdens on them to educate those in the majority and come at the expense of solidarity-building as part of the value promotion function of civic education (Levinson 2012b, 93).

The second component of the challenge presented by Levinson & Reid (2019) is that, given existing teaching contracts and judicial precedent, educators do not have significant First Amendment rights. As a result, they may not be protected should the surrounding community take issue with their attempts to cultivate an open classroom climate (90-95). In light of these features of the contemporary political environment, some communities may see civic education that promotes learning and exposure in the presence of diversity as an alien imposition of social goals, or an attempt to indoctrinate students out of the community's prevailing perspective. In this way, the very social epistemic challenges that civic education is supposed to ameliorate may also impose a major threat to its feasibility and stability.

One potential response to these concerns about social engineering and indoctrination is to reject them as illegitimate. For example, Harvey Siegel (2017) argue that in cases where the educational needs of democracy, for example to develop citizens with critical thinking skills, come into conflict with cultural values, the requirements of democratic education should take precedence (284). I am sympathetic to this line of reasoning in some cases, but I worry that it

[103] Consider this quote from a student, observed by Diana Hess (2009), who complained of political bias in the starting point of the multi school deliberation he was exposed to: "America has made terrible mistakes. We are terrible people, the Right is wrong. Now go from here." (91).

does not help us to navigate the pressing threats to the viability of civic education to improve our social epistemic environment, such as the perception of the threat of indoctrination.[104] However, I think an emphasis on civic exchange can provide some additional guidance about how to address this challenge.

To illustrate how the civic exchange function of civic education can help manage these concerns, it is worth first noting some limitations. It will not be possible to satisfy every social engineering or indoctrination objection to civic education. Some citizens may not be content with simply opting out of civic education efforts and will seek to maximize the representation of their (e.g., partisan or religious) views in civic education curricula, while others will see a healthier social epistemic environment as a threat to their political goals. On the other hand, citizens that are especially likely to be affected by partisan, ethnocentric, or populist appeals are also especially important to reach, in order to improve the social epistemic environment. In order to secure the involvement of at least some of these citizens, their concerns need to be addressed, and this might involve departures from civic education approaches that are especially amenable to the most ambitious forms of civic exchange and epistemic civic virtue.

Furthermore, the involvement of citizens who are predisposed to be skeptical of the civic exchange function of civic education is crucial to the successful promotion of epistemic civic virtue. Insofar as these citizens form a significant part of the body politic, their attitudes and beliefs help determine what policies are feasible, and they are a source of information about the potential effects of policy proposals. As a result, other citizens need to have the knowledge,

[104] Relatedly, Allen (2004) argues that democracies must attend to citizens' subjective experiences of loss (or apparent losses) when their preferred outcomes do not win out (151). However, Allen's rationale is that feelings of political loss can influence citizens' ongoing consent to the prevailing policies, whereas in this case, I am concerned with increasing the provision of civic education to a wide swath of citizens.

skills, and mindset to be able to factor these perspectives into their reasoning, and learning about and engaging with citizens with these perspectives is a useful way of preparing to do so.

This social epistemic need coincides with two potential benefits for those citizens who are skeptical of civic exchange. First, the participation of exchange-skeptical citizens in civic education initiatives contributes to improving the capacity of other citizens to be responsive to their interests and concerns. Second, exchange-skeptical citizens may benefit from an increased capacity to communicate with citizens other perspectives, if only because it will enable them to cooperate on any issues where they do find forms of agreement.

It is also worth noting that every civic education course and classroom cannot represent every perspective and every axis of diversity, if only due to constraints on classroom time. So, civic educators can prioritize the forms of civic exchange that are most feasible and least likely to be contested. This might involve, as I discussed above, relying on the diversity already present in a given classroom, but also strategically identifying cross-cutting exposure that also features some forms of commonality. For example, in a classroom context where most students have a left-wing, liberatory political orientation, discussions of religion in politics might start with religious perspectives that share this political orientation. Similarly, in a classroom context where exposure to minority religious traditions will be perceived as threatening, educators might best pursue exchange, and promote the building blocks of epistemic civic virtue, by having students grapple with disagreements and differences within the prevailing religious tradition.[105] The skills

[105] This approach may require identifying and leveraging opportunities for civic exchange that are worrisome in some respects, but which will expand the reach of the civic exchange function of civic education. One illustrative example is the Joshua Project, which is an organization that seeks to promote evangelical Christianity in the parts of the world where it is least prevalent. As part of these efforts, it maintains an array of resources on different social and cultural traditions across the world, and exposes evangelical Christians to a wider array of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Given the missionary purpose of this program, non-evangelical citizens would, of course, have legitimate social engineering and indoctrination objections to having to participate in such programs, so my approach would oppose state involvement in such initiatives. But, in communities where evangelical Christianity is predominant, it might be useful to include such initiatives as an object of discussion, and create opportunities for students to draw on their experiences with these initiatives to contribute to discussion. For more on the Joshua Project, see its website: https://joshuaproject.net/.

developed in this more constrained setting might then transfer to contexts where the scope of difference is greater, and thereby create more opportunities for the development of epistemic civic virtue.

Given the limitations I noted above, I am not under the illusion that these strategies will address all concerns about social engineering and indoctrination. But, they demonstrate the ways in which a concern for civic exchange, and for the promotion of epistemic civic virtue, will require concessions to citizens that are not predisposed to take part in these forms of civic education, and why such citizens might come to see such participation as a net benefit. In this way, the social epistemic case for civic education can secure the broad and diverse base of support required to make such initiatives politically feasible, stable over time, and effective.

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have articulated a form of public good justification for civic education that appeals to the benefits of an improved social epistemic environment. I have argued that civic education, in the form of civics courses offered through formal schooling, can serve to promote citizens' epistemic civic virtue in order to mitigate the effects of social epistemic challenges like polarization. Furthermore, I have argued that civic education can promote epistemic civic virtue with an increased emphasis on the civic exchange function of civic education, rather than a focus on the value promotion function. Finally, I have demonstrated how this approach can manage concerns about the potential for social engineering and indoctrination through civic education. While this theoretical framework is far from a curricular or pedagogical blueprint, it does provide some resources with which to evaluate civic education initiatives at the national, state, and local level, and can be used to formulate arguments in favor of some particular curricular or

pedagogical choices, and at the expense of others. While the benefits of improvements in civic education practices may not be felt in the short term, my hope is that they may contribute in the long run to an improvement in our social epistemic environment, in concert with other forms of civic action.

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Concluding Remarks

Over the course of the preceding chapters, I have developed standards with which to evaluate and improve the social epistemic performance of three key nodes of democratic systems. First, I argued that social epistemic challenges to democratic health threaten the extent to which citizens can make use of the means democracy offers them to advance their interests, and thereby limit the extent to which democracy can promote a variety of motivating values to which theorists appeal. Furthermore, I argued that democratic theorists and practitioners should attend to the development of epistemic civic virtue among the citizenry, in order to respond to these challenges. Second, I argued that systems of representative institutions should be assessed according to the standard of systemic interest-responsiveness. This standard can help representatives, and the institutions in which they operate, to address the tradeoffs that emerge under non-ideal epistemic circumstances by providing action-guidance for individual representatives, while guiding efforts at institutional design, such as the pairing of independent administrative agencies with expanded forms of public input. Finally, I have put forth a social epistemic public good standard with which to evaluate and improve civic education efforts. I have argued that civic education should aim at cultivating epistemic civic virtue in order to promote the social epistemic public good, and should emphasize the civic exchange function of civic education in order to do so. Together, these standards provide a normative theoretical toolkit with which to address the social epistemic circumstances in which contemporary democracies like the U.S. are currently situated.

I now turn to describing some directions for future research that follow from this dissertation.

One especially important direction for future research involves incorporating insights from comparative political research to expand the scope of the standards I develop here. I engage almost exclusively with empirical evidence from the United States, which serves as a useful starting point given the volume of research that has been produced, and my own familiarity with it. However, it would be useful to consider the problems I address in this dissertation when key parameters fall in a very different range of values. Consider democracies in Latin America, where there is a history of institutional volatility and the abandonment of campaign platforms once representatives take office, and where concerns about corruption are especially salient (Stokes 2001; Seligson 2006). Under these circumstances, the best ways to manage tradeoffs between sovereignty and non-alienation through representative institutions may look very different to those that would work well in democracies with very different contexts and histories like the U.S. Similarly, given the context sensitivity of the promotion of democratic health, the most promising forms of civic action guided through which citizens can exercise epistemic civic virtue may be quite different to those in the U.S. Through a close examination of comparative political research, I could expand the domain of application for my theoretical framework and develop further insights about the way in which different features of democracies can interact.

Another exciting direction for further research would be to develop standards for additional nodes of systems of democracy, as the three I have considered here are not exhaustive by any means. One node that is worth exploring is the relationship between (a) scientists and scientific institutions, (b) formal political representatives, and (c) democratic citizens more broadly. Scientific institutions are relevant to the social epistemology of democracy because they

a source of expertise for policymaking and can influence the public's understanding of political debates. For this reason, scientific institutions might be taken to play a representative role, and could plausibly be held accountable to citizens' goals to some degree, while scientific interaction with policymakers and the public at large could be a site for the improvement of democratic health.

In addition to scientific institutions, political parties also play an important representative role to the formal elected and agency roles I considered in chapter 2. Political parties can play a major role in agenda setting and also shape citizens' political learning and reasoning processes. However, unlike representatives with determined geographic constituency, political parties also seem to have some degree of agency over the constituency they are perceived to represent. These features of political parties might require additional theoretical machinery to assess their contributions to systemic interest-responsiveness, which would differ from the account I applied to elected officials and administrative agencies.

Finally, I also hope to consider opportunities for civic action that might become more feasible or more promising in light of improvements in the social epistemic conditions of democracy. For example, with improvements in citizens' capacities to communicate across social cleavages, it may become easier for citizens to form diverse coalitions around shared interests or goals. Furthermore, such coalitions may be overlapping and crosscutting, rather than aligning along similar lines of social division. These circumstances might require further tools in order to evaluate representatives and citizens operating within these coalitions, some of which might be continuous with the evaluation of political parties discussed above, but some of which might involve importantly different sites of civic action such as churches and non-partisan activist groups. For example, there are normative questions about when coalition partners should

exit a coalition in light of disagreements or conflicting interests, and what they owe the partners with whom they disagree in those circumstances.

As these directions for further research demonstrate, there many ways to add to the theoretical toolbox that I have started in this dissertation. My hope is that these efforts will contribute to the larger body of theoretical and empirical research on democracies, and that together these research domains will prove useful to practitioners' efforts to improve the way democracies function over time.

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